THE CHARM · OF TEACHING CHILDREN ·

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THE CHARM OF TEACHING CHILDREN

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Educational Times.—'Teachers will revel in this unusual, stimulating and wholesome volume.'

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THE CHARM OF TEACHING CHILDREN

BY

WILLIAM ROBB
Inspector of Schools.

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE author gladly seizes the opportunity given by the publication of this second edition to thank those readers who have been so kind as to write to him expressing the pleasure they derived from reading the book, and at the same time he is glad to have the chance to correct a number of slips which had passed revision in the first edition.

ROSEBANK, BOTHWELL,
1925.

PREFACE

SOME time ago, the gist of one of the following meditations appeared anonymously in *The Scottish Educational Journal.* A reader was good enough to write to the Editor, suggesting that the author might be able and willing to expand the brief article into ' an interesting book.'

The author was willing to try ; whether he has in a measure succeeded is for the reader to say.

ROCKCLIFFE, DALBEATTIE,
August 1922.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Prologises	1
II.	Trailing Clouds	12
III.	Shades of the Prison-House	22
IV.	Ex ore Infantium	34
V.	Lions in the Path	47
VI.	De Libris et Liberis	61
VII.	Mimetics	75
VIII.	Crambe Repetita	86
IX.	Realms of Gold	98
X.	Windows of Heaven	111
XI.	Orpheus with His Lute	122
XII.	Littera Scripta	135
XIII.	Ars Longa	148
XIV.	Vita Brevis	161
XV.	Visions and Dreams	173
XVI.	The Day's Wages	185

CHAPTER I

PROLOGISES

He is a happy man who is familiar with charms; he is a bold man who ventures to define them. If they are real, they cannot but be subtle, and their delicacy makes the task of exposition at once difficult and dangerous. The difficulty lies in finding adequate expression for elusive joys; the danger is that injustice may be done to Youth, where only admiration and gratitude are due.

In the meditations which follow, the reader will look in vain for great exemplars of what Youth has been or should be; he will waste time if he search here for profound theories or pointed moral apothegms; but if he care to follow the writer in his survey he may find much concerning what the Youth of to-day really is, and what it does, and how it learns and teaches, and perhaps even a little of what it thinks.

For it is in the heart of the author to set down

in these pages some of the many things that he has learned from Youth in the course of years spent in close touch with it, and to express as best he may a little of the happiness that he has owed to Youth during those years.

The older world concerned itself principally with the duties of Youth, and paid scant heed to the rights and privileges ; it was easier by far to say what Youth owed to Age than what Age owed to Youth. So for many and many a day Youth lacked the recognition it merited Indeed it was not really until last century that men began to consider seriously their duty towards the generations that were to follow.

He spoke not amiss who called last century 'The Children's Century.' For in truth it was in the great days of Victoria that our children began to come into their heritage, and to enjoy a freedom without parallel in the world's history. Before the nineteenth century was far advanced it had become evident to the people of these islands that Emancipation was not for the Catholic or for the Slave alone, but for the Child. When Freedom came, it brought with it an interest in children and an appreciation of their worth that have since given birth to many a joy till then unknown and unsuspected.

True, convention died hard. Victorian boys and girls, like Athenian children in the great days of Pericles, were expected 'to be seen, but not heard.' Discipline had still to be rigidly maintained, and the age was at least tolerant of, if it did not openly commend, such teachers of Youth as would well have merited Horace's epithet 'Plagosus.'

Nothing shows us more clearly that children now live in a new world than the complete inapplicability to-day of many of the old sayings about children and about school. What modern Lucian could say, as did the Greek of old, 'Who ever came from a feast weeping, as we see a boy come from school?' How often, in these days, may one encounter Shakespeare's

> 'Whining schoolboy, with his satchel,
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail,
> Unwillingly to school'?

He might, indeed, be found, but he could no longer be regarded as a type.

Nor is the teacher less fortunate than the pupil; the century of Emancipation did not pass him by. The stigma of ages has at length been all but, if not entirely, erased. Not now could a Demosthenes taunt his antagonist with having fallen so low as to be forced to assist as usher in a school. No

Juvenal of to-day will immortalise the poor drudge of a schoolmaster. It has to be admitted that in our own earlier fiction the schoolmaster is usually far from being a heroic figure. He may not always be a Eugene Aram, or a Bradley Headstone; but even Dominie Sampson, lovable as he is, cuts rather a sorry figure.

At last our children are coming into their own, and the aim of this book is to endeavour to open the eyes of an unseeing throng of folk who wander vaguely and without vision in a fair world of Youth; to show them, if they will, just a little of the joy that children carry with them as the saint his aureole; to say a word or two in defence of the rights of these heirs-presumptive to a goodly heritage; to try to interest all who love children, and all who have to deal with them in any capacity whatsoever, in their ways and in their well-being.

In Scotland we have a proverb to the effect that they are not to be trusted whom dogs and 'bairns' dislike. As well might we profoundly distrust those who profess to dislike children. They cannot but be a miserable few, and in all likelihood they deserve our pity rather than our censure. For to profess a dislike for children is to confess to a skeleton in the cupboard which the prying eyes of the little ones might bring to the

light of day. There are no critics like children, and they frequently criticise with extreme point at particularly inconvenient moments. Those who would live with them and deal with them must have but few weak joints in their armour if they would spend a happy and useful life in their midst. For the very first thing all natural children do when a grown-up seeks the entrée to their carefully-guarded presence is to try him by tests of their own devising, and cunning beyond measure. If he meet the tests, he is accepted and acclaimed as a brother, but if he fail, and continue his endeavour, then woe betide him ! There is seldom, if ever, a second chance given. So it behoves all of us who would enjoy the companionship of Youth and, while enjoying it, be of service to Youth, to see to it that we succeed in passing the frontier in peace and giving the password at the proper season. Nor is there any restriction forbidding one who has entered to pass on to those who fain would follow a word or two of well-meant and friendly counsel.

The reflections here set down are meant primarily for those who have the good fortune to be brought constantly into touch with Youth—for parents, whose stake in the matter is infinitely great, for teachers, whose happiness in life hangs by their

success, for employers and preachers and magistrates, whose way in life is ever and anon intersecting the orbit of Youth.

A certain wise and worthy Professor of Education in a Northern University, addressing some valedictory words to his students, gave them the emphatic counsel: 'And now, gentlemen, most important of all, do not go away to your life-work in schools with the stupid and cruel prejudice that all children are little devils.' Perhaps the old gentleman had been reading an episode in one of Sarah Grand's earlier books, *The Heavenly Twins*, where the twins sing an 'anthem' entitled 'Papa Says.' It runs thus:—'Papa says—Papa says—that we are—we are—Papa says that we are—little devils—that we are little devils—and so we are—and so we are—world without end—little devils world without end—Amen.' The passage is probably all many of us remember of the book; its cruelty and untruth have preserved it.

Teachers are like golfers—amateur and professional—and if there were an Open Championship in the Art of Teaching, the prize-list might furnish some surprising results. One could not press the analogy too far, because, while a golf-ball seems, more or less, to obey the laws of gravity, 'A boy's will is the wind's will.' Therein lies at once

the great obstacle to, and the chief charm in, the Art of Teaching. 'To learn' is by no means the passive form of 'to teach.' Aristotle put the matter in a nutshell when he said, in the tenth book of his *Ethics* :—'It is not any one who tries, who can shape the character of the pupil who presents himself, but (if it is possible at all) only the man who understands.' Clearly, the great philosopher had his doubts about the whole business, as the parenthesis seems to show. And modern psychology is at one with ancient on the point. For the fundamental question in teaching is not one of intellect at all, but of simple volition ; in fact, it is the old story of leading the horse to the water. Any old slave might be a 'Paidagogos,' but his part was essentially a minor one ; when the horse reached the riverside his work was done. He did not try to do more, and in so doing he was wise.

A Greek painting on a vase of the fifth century shows scenes from a school, and the most striking feature of them is that the teachers appear to be doing nothing, the pupils everything. One boy is reciting an ode, another is fingering a lyre, a third working with an abacus : the teachers let the pupils do their work, and do not interfere. And Greece was the glory of the ancient world.

Both Plato and Aristotle speak with some hesitation about a possible national system of education ; they feel that the state should do more than it does, but they clearly see dangers ahead. It would be interesting to have their opinions on some phases of modern education, wherein the child is made the *corpus vile* of endless experiments, well-meant indeed, but highly distracting. So keen has become the desire of state and parent alike for the child's progress, that the man who ventures to insist for a moment on the child's point of view is apt in these days to shock his contemporaries. Squeers and Gradgrind had, one remembers, a long day of power before Dickens outed them.

But teaching, as understood and practised to-day, is not by any means the dark art it has sometimes been painted. There is something more in it than Drudgery and Daily Bread. It is, in fact, often called by glib orators ' the noblest profession on earth,' but, curiously enough, few of these gentlemen are in the habit of condescending in their speeches—which have usually a personal end in view—to detail. The classic ' Apologia ' for the teaching profession has yet to be written, but in the meantime it is interesting, and may be useful, to try to set down in plain words a few of the

good things which—to borrow a fine phrase from the Westminster Assembly of Divines—' do accompany and flow from ' successful teaching.

Here is a true story which is not without its point in this connection. A boy had, in a fit of temper, assaulted a lady teacher in school, and he was promptly and deservedly punished. His father, hearing but one side of the story, visited the school to make further investigation. When the headmaster laid the facts before him, he shook his head in a puzzled fashion, and made this striking comment : ' Well, Sir, of course I admit that Tommy was wrong to raise his hand against a woman, but then, don't you see, Sir, somehow or other, a Teacher is quite different.'

Now it is just of some of the *differentiae* that mark off the species ' teacher ' from the genus ' homo ' that there is need to speak. In the most strict sense, Teaching is ' somehow different ' from most other arts. It is hard but happy work. The teacher might say of himself, as Ferdinand says in the *Tempest* :—

> ' These sweet thoughts do even refresh my labours,
> Most busiest when I do least.'

For the teacher's best work is done almost without conscious effort. He has his shameful successes

and his brilliant failures. One excellent headmaster long preserved with jealous care an Inspector's report which he regarded as his crowning disgrace :—

> 'This school has now reached the acme of mechanical excellence.'

Small wonder that the world of school is a land of paradox! Does not R. L. Stevenson remind us that the University medallist is frequently a very dull dog in life, while the butt of school satire turns out a prince of good fellows? With children any mortal thing is possible. As Bernard Shaw has it, 'You never can tell.' There lies the whole charm of teaching; one never knows what is coming.

A Scotsman was asked how he had enjoyed his first ride in a motor-car. 'Fine, man,' was his reply, 'but I was aye thinkin' Eternity was roon' the next corner.' That is not quite how it feels to be teaching, but it is the same in principle. In fact, teaching is not at all unlike burn-fishing; one is ever carried along by the persistent hope that round the next bend one will come upon something worth while.

There are indeed many things worth while, and the reflections that follow suggest a few and re-

count others. They have been grouped roughly in the order of development, and touch on all stages of school life from the day when the tiny child first enters the grim portals till the time when he leaves, to pass the more formidable barriers that must be overcome on the way to Life. Like life itself, school has its clouds and its shadows, but by a kind law of Nature, these are apt to vanish in the retrospect, giving place to memories of the happier things that were by far the more numerous, and are, without a grain of doubt, the more worthy of chronicle.

CHAPTER II

TRAILING CLOUDS

'But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.'

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN the day comes on which a motto falls to be selected which is to be emblazoned on the heraldic insignia of the teaching profession, those with whom rests the grave responsibility will do well to consider the four-word jewel of Juvenal, 'Maxima puero debetur reverentia.'

Nothing is more striking evidence of the high function of children in the scheme of things than the place assigned to them by the great poets, from Homer down. The scene in the sixth *Iliad* where Hector appears with his wife and child is among the most human and tender things in literature. Children are not very numerous in Shakespeare, but they always count heavily in the action. The babe in Tennyson's *Princess* is the crux of the whole conception. Browning's Pippa passes through the poem which bears her name like a veritable enchantress. Nor is it in poetry

alone that children hold sway; we owe to them some of the most great-hearted things in prose. Bunyan's Christina is the finer for the little ones who journey with her. Children frolic in some of our earlier novels. Lamb is never more charming than in 'Dream Children.' Those who love Scott must admit that his affectionate care for Pet Marjorie is one of the loveliest things in his biography. Dickens has a gallery of children of all classes, and he is as true to life in his drawing as he is wide in his range. Rarely does the expression of emotion ring more true than when it touches on the loss of a child—witness Arnold's 'Requiescat,' or Richard Middleton's 'On a Dead Child,' or Wordsworth's 'Lucy.' The mere memory of what children have been to these great souls has power to hush the voice and soften the step. 'Favete linguis!' is no inapt preface to reflections in such a mood.

And where precisely lies this power? How comes it that children can thus mellow and subdue even the harsher natures? Spenser understood when he painted Una followed by the lamb, and safe from the lion. What holds rude natures and savage forces like the fear of the unknown? What stills the tongue and lightens the tread like the close proximity of a great secret? And truly all

who move thoughtfully in the atmosphere of Youth must feel that they may at any moment hear the beat of angels' wings or gain a transient glimpse of Paradise itself. Arnold has a fine poem inspired by the glance of a gipsy child in its mother's arms. To the scholar-poet it seemed that even the sadness of a child had a glory all its own.

> 'Thy sorrow and thy calmness are thine own;
> Glooms that enhance and glorify this earth.'

The poem breathes that reverence and wonder which are childhood's due, and which childhood has in all ages exacted. The voice which utters the salute to Youth varies, but it persists. We hear it when Agamemnon speaks of Iphigeneia; we hear it call to Wendy and Peter Pan. Time and again in the world's history philosophers have sought means of reaching the secret and of holding it, but in vain. As the old Greeks are said to have tried to discover what tongue a child would speak if left quite to itself, so Rousseau, in his *Émile*, would urge us to follow Nature and thus preserve the charm. But, alas! children *will* grow up, and cease to be wonderful and elusive enigmas.

An Inspector of Schools, writing to a colleague about an Infant School, said: 'The discipline

of this school is shocking; but the children are great; they don't care a damn for anybody.' This was long before the days of Montessori, but it would appeal to her.

In the contest between Home and School, Home always wins. The greatest University on earth is the University of the street, and akin to it is that to which Barrie referred in his St. Andrews Rectorial Address—the good Home, such a home as tries to give its children a chance. Horace knew it, as did Burns. *Res angusta domi* was no less urgent a factor in the Venusian household than in the cottage by the braes of Doon. What a man will not dream of doing for himself he will venture for his offspring, and the true teacher, being *in loco parentis*, comes so far under a similar stress. He must live up to his pupils, and he very often does.

Between parent and teacher there arises at times a perfectly natural jealousy. Each is apt to resent the influence of the other, and the fact that their spheres have so much in common makes the relations extremely delicate. To this jealousy one may attribute the widespread ignorance on the part of the general public as to what goes on in schools. A parent would be uncomfortable in school, seeing his children under the sway of

another; a teacher would be uncomfortable in the presence of a parent, knowing the parent's *ius* to be stronger than his own. And yet both may be striving their utmost for the same end. By a curious law of his nature, the schoolboy develops a wise reticence. To begin with, he may recount at home the events of his school day, but ere long he joins the conspiracy of silence. At recurrent moments one hears shocking tales of what goes on in schools, but the sensible man does not attach too much weight to what he knows to be, in all likelihood, nothing more than a periodic, though severe, spasm of parental jealousy.

That contact with children exercises a profound influence on 'their betters' is clearly shown by the fact that the best teachers are often those whose home-life has been sweetened by children. At the same time it must be said that many a woman finds in teaching an outlet for maternal instincts that might otherwise atrophy.

It is a popular belief that almost any woman can teach little children, and it is quite erroneous. The peculiar virtues of little ones make no universal appeal. Simple faith, freedom from fear, and a tendency to instinctive action do not always meet with the response they deserve. Who that has read 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' can forget Kipling's

dreadful picture of Anti Rosa, lavishing love on one child and at the same time cruelly torturing another—and all in what she believed to be the straight path of duty ?

Doubtless Wordsworth was right ; the pity is that too often the clouds of glory are bedimmed by human frailty and vanish in an atmosphere of mistrust. Happily, it is not always so. Many a time we see the clouds of glory shining through pain and hunger and evil repute. Some of the most charming blossoms spring up in strange soil. Nature is no niggard in the distribution of her human charms. As one may see a wanderer of the streets adorned with hair or a complexion for which many a Society dame would willingly pawn her jewels, so, in these wonderful nurseries misnamed ' slum ' schools may be found natures of the sunniest and hearts of very gold. Only those who live among such children know how ready is the response to frank kindness, and how rich the return. These little ones open their hearts to love as a flower turns to the sun. True, the bloom is often exotic and short-lived, but it has real glory while it lasts.

Some day a child of the slums, grown to full maturity, will write his autobiography, and then the world will know. Then we shall realise how

brave is the heart of the starveling child, how ready his sympathy with a weaker one, at what cost he has tried to please those he admires and esteems, how valiant have been his efforts to control the nervous body with which he has been ever hampered. And we shall learn what compensations he has had, and how stupid were those who deemed him dull. Already our poets have seen glimpses ;—witness Laurence Binyon's fine picture of the ragged children dancing in the light of a tavern window to the strains of a barrel organ :—

> 'Face to face they gaze,
> Their eyes shining, grave with a perfect pleasure,'

but then we shall really know. We shall admire the imaginative gift that devises dramas with mud and brickbats as the sole stage appurtenances, or finds an El Dorado in a dust-heap. We shall respect as we ought the delicacy that shrinks from seeming to pose as superior, and masks itself in gallant rowdyism ; we shall credit the hooligan with a little of the adventurous spirit we set down as merit in the heroes of Dumas. And we shall know how it feels to live in a world that lacks such things as books, pictures, music, and flowers.

We shall know, too, why teachers often prefer service in 'Slumdom' to polite drudgery in

'Ladies' Seminaries' or 'High Class Kindergartens.' For the child who is 'let alone,' as Dickens's poor Jo would fain have been, grows by Nature's grace, and ofttimes trails clouds long and luminous in a world whose drab dinginess sadly needs their illumination.

All who know the children of the poorer quarters must have been struck by the care which is bestowed on them in their early years. They may be neglected later, but it is very rarely to be found that the child of four or five suffers from parental neglect. There is something about the young child that serves as a shield amid the 'slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.' The appeal of weakness is confirmed by the sense of mystery, and the parent seems to recognise that to the young life there still clings something of the Unknown whence it came. One has only to visit a 'slum' school on a gala day to observe what pride the mothers have in these little ones, and with what care and joy they adorn them for a special occasion. In fact, on such days the children are so metamorphosed that they are with difficulty recognised by their own teachers. The fine raiment seems not to be without its effect on the general behaviour of the child. The theory has been mooted that colour has its strong influence

on conduct ; the child who behaves well in crimson may be a little imp in gray or black. There is no reason why it may not be so ; Addison pointed out long ago the benefit to the rural community of the Sunday, on which they might convene ' in their best apparel ' to discourse on affairs other than those which occupied their week-day thoughts.

As the school deals with the child, so the child can react on the home. Not a little of the great good done in our poor schools is achieved through this medium. The teacher who is completely in earnest makes a point of getting to know not only the child, but the parent, and it is no uncommon thing to find an Infant Mistress whose word is law not only in school but throughout a whole neighbourhood. The parents come to ask her advice not only on matters of education alone, but on all sorts of domestic affairs. There is no better way of approach to the parent than through the offspring, and every social worker recognises how vitally important the child is in all projects of reform. One feels that for these little ones nothing is too good. We may not be able to right the wrongs of this generation, but there is always some hope of helping the next, and in the children lies our hope. Nor is the hope a vain one. Every

teacher who has lived for a generation in a poor quarter can instance cases of parents who made up their minds that their children should have a better chance in life than they themselves have had. And the school has been the civilising influence. Sometimes the struggle is a hard one, but it seldom fails to produce a new generation that is in many ways superior to the old. Ever so many small things go to indicate that there is no room for pessimism. For example the attitude of children generally to school life is much more friendly than it was thirty years ago, when the teacher was regarded as the natural enemy of all children. Another straw that shows how the wind blows is the almost complete disappearance of the truant from school; a third sign of grace is seen in the more kindly treatment of animals that prevails to-day. The normal cat does not run from, but to, the ordinary child. And at the root of it all is the fact that children have come into their own. The clouds of glory are better seen and more generally reverenced than they were a century ago. Their period of illumination, too, is a longer one, and we seek rather to prolong it than to cut it short. And ours, as well as theirs, is the gain.

CHAPTER III

SHADES OF THE PRISON-HOUSE

A PERIOD of transition is always attended by more or less of difficulty and hardship. When the child first enters on school-life he steps into a new world in which the individual will must of necessity be subordinated to considerations of the general good. The untrammelled freedom of nursery or of street gives place to the ordered activity of a group. What the child thinks of it all we can but conjecture, though now and then we are favoured with an honest opinion. A little boy arrived for his first day in a school in a poor quarter of a city. He was placed in an Infant class, and spent the first two hours in what seemed to the teacher to be a state of awe-stricken silence. Then he rose from his seat and made a journey of investigation through the room, looking at the pictures on the walls and examining the scholastic apparatus. The teacher left him to his own devices, and expected that he would soon join in the general activity from a desire to imitate the others. But

she got rather a shock when the juvenile critic marched up to her desk and solemnly announced his opinion and his intention in these words: 'This is a hell o' a hoose; I 'm awa' hame.'

Rarely do we have the fact expressed with such pith and point, but it is incontrovertible that the shades of the Prison-House *do* close on little children in an almost inevitable fashion. Between work and play there often seems to be a gulf fixed, and try as we will we may fail to bridge it with success. Good work must of necessity bring pleasure, and children love doing the things they can do. They do not always love *learning* to do them. Blundering is by no means a pleasure, but it is the lot of all of us. The very eagles blunder into flying, but the old birds see to it that the lessons are short. So must it be in our schools; it is dangerous to allow children to fail too often: the effort should cease before the will to succeed begins to flag. Most things seem to be achieved with a startling suddenness at the last. At 9.25 a boy cannot swim; at 9.30 he can. The magic moment must be seized while the will is strong if real enjoyment is to follow. Many children never learn certain things because they have missed the tide, and they never again bring the full will to bear. The gates are closed.

Every school day must contain these fertile moments, but of course they are far from being either numerous or continuous. There must be recreative intervals of comparative quiescence. 'Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo' is an excellent motto for an Infant School, better by far than Dante's 'Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che'ntrate.' Teachers sometimes complain that the school day is too short, children hardly ever. The prisoner dislikes not the times of exercise, but the periods of enforced inaction. So children like to be doing, rather than merely observing or listening. They regret the end of a period of activity, but rejoice when a passive or quasi-receptive state comes to an end. It is for this reason that practical lessons in Science, Handwork, Gardening, and the like are always so popular.

But it is not in school alone that the shades gather; home-environment too has its shadows. Too often the child is set to drudge at home from a very early age. Most teachers in industrial districts have observed that girls, after they become old enough to wash dishes and scrub floors, or tend babies, show a diminishing zest for school. Boys have their tasks, too, it is true, but these usually have some 'relish of salvation' in them; the lad who runs messages, or goes round in the

morning whistling, with his milk-cans on his arm, is more fortunate than his sister, for he is in the way of acquiring such education as the street always gives.

Country children have all the luck. How much the world would have missed if Shakespeare's boyhood had been spent in London ! For country children at least, benign influences retard the closing of the prison-doors. The journey to and from school is a joy and an education in itself ; the companionship of birds and flowers and open sky are no mean preparation for the day's work. Few outsiders can really understand just how little direct instruction a country child of tender years can possibly receive in school in a day. The teacher has, say, thirty pupils, in five or six groups, and it is a sheer impossibility for each child to be under direct instruction for more than a mere fraction of the day. Nowhere has more ingenuity been expended than in devising occupations for the little ones, to tide them through the hours which are given to their older brothers and sisters. Time was when stony and stolid silence was the rule, but we live in happier days. Even mud-pies find their analogue in the up-to-date school, to say nothing of rocking-horses, jig-saws, and boxes of tools. For by these and other such

kindly devices do we try to postpone the day of the shadow.

When one looks back to the Factory Acts of a hundred years ago, it is possible to see how we have advanced. Who to-day would tolerate the idea of children of five and six working in mines or at nail-making? Legislation has secured what Mrs. Browning so beautifully and poignantly urged in her 'Cry of the Children.' The world has still some way to travel before happy childhood is assured for all, but undoubtedly the day is less distant than it was when childhood shall be free in the best and fullest sense.

Whether the Puritans are to blame or not is an open question, but assuredly the average school-room is anything but a place of beauty. Even thirty years ago the classrooms in some of our universities were the acme of discomfort and inconvenience; and the semblance of comfort was sadly to seek in many of our great Public Schools. On one occasion a School Board had met to consider the equipment of a new country school. Some kindly soul suggested certain very modest steps in the direction of comfortable seating, and was met by the indignant objection, 'But, Good Heavens, we hadn't such things in Eton.' 'No,' was the neat rejoinder; 'you didn't

need them there because you had them at home ; our children here don't have them at home.' We are indeed a curious people, and it is little wonder so many foreigners regard us as mad. For it seems to be an axiom with us that the higher the intellectual or spiritual fare, the greater should be the physical discomfort. What would happen if, in the space of a magic night, our church pews were to change places with the seats in our theatres and picture-houses ? Would our churches begin to pay dividends, and our theatres to play Shakespeare ? Of course it is largely a matter of money ; comfort usually costs something. Fortunately, beauty is often cheap, and wise teachers see to it that even in city slums, flowers and pictures and even singing-birds relieve at little or no cost the encompassing dinginess.

It is sadly true that for the teacher also the Prison-house has its fast-closing shades. No occupation seems to play more rapid havoc with youthful bloom. After all, bloom is barely skin-deep, and where the heart is sound, no grave disaster may follow. But every woman knows that five years of teaching are as wearing as ten of business or twenty of happy domestic life. And it cannot but be so ; for in the lot of every true teacher whose heart is in the work there must

needs be much vicarious suffering. Mere physical discomfort in draughty rooms and bad air does not tear the heart-strings. But the teacher sees so much neglect and indifference, such waste of fine material, such gross materialism and self-seeking, that suffering is certain to accelerate the process of age. To know just how some children live is a perpetual heartbreak. We have all heard of parents like him who, when a teacher suggested that a boy of defective eyesight should visit a doctor, promptly told the would-be friend that he wanted no more of his ' blasted interference ! ' Every head of a large school meets with the boy who wishes to go to college, and ought to go to college, and could go to college, but whose parents insist on his earning an immediate weekly pittance to pay for his keep. One headmaster tells of a boy who should have been a Cambridge Wrangler, but is breaking stones, and of a girl who was clearly meant to be a great botanist, but is actually a farm-servant. Sometimes the teacher has a bitter but legitimate disappointment, such as befell the man who was frankly told by an extremely clever pupil that he (the pupil) had made up his mind that the life of a farmer was really more useful by far than that of an Oxford Don !

Some workmen were the other day engaged in

an animated debate while on their homeward journey. The theme was Work, and one protagonist held that Work, in all forms, and under all conditions, was an evil. If, by any chance, it tended to become pleasant, it accordingly ceased to be Work. Life, he contended, comprised two regions, Work and Pleasure, and these regions had no common territory. One worked in order to enter the Pleasure-garden (in this case a paradise where the fountains ran good beer, and one might see a League Match every day). Such a philosophy, one must admit, while neither subtle nor elaborate, has the charm of honesty. One could not but admit that in an age of industrialism and specialisation such as ours, there must needs be some forms of work over which even Mark Tapley himself could hardly have been jolly.

Fortunately, the art of teaching is not one of these. The true teacher is always, and of necessity, an optimist. The pessimists among teachers have sadly mistaken their vocation. They are like poor old Aunt Butson in Quiller Couch's novel, who closed her pedagogic career by inscribing on the blackboard the vigorous optative, 'Blast all Education!' The school is no place for the pessimist; in teaching there ought to be, and

there are, what Wordsworth calls 'Vital feelings of delight.' If only all could find them!

Teaching, like the other creative arts, gives both pain and pleasure. To the teacher, no less than to the poet and the painter, come the inspiration and the glow, 'the vision and the faculty divine'; it matters not whether the artist work in words or in pigments or in that medium more delicate by far than either—the nature of a little child. It may be true that the teacher works as a rule under commission, but he must nevertheless follow an original design and strive for a personal ideal of his own conception. Parliaments and Committees and Authorities may issue Acts and Codes and Regulations *ad infinitum*, but in the end the educational battle is lost or won by reason of the character and outlook of the individual teacher.

And, happily, the picture is not all dark. Thanks in great measure to our love of outdoor existence and to the charms, fitful, indeed, but real, of our climate, Youth has a variety in life which acts as a preservative. One has heard the contrast drawn between the casual indifference of the British schoolboy and the serious outlook of his continental *confrère*, but it is well to remember

that Youth at sixteen can be too serious, and one would certainly deplore the advent of a day which might give, from a British pen, such a picture of Youth as may be found in Wildenbruch's *Das Edle Blut*. Waterloos are won on more playing-fields than those of Eton and Harrow.

But there are shades beyond those of school, and dark ones enough. School does much to hold back awhile the prison doors, but ofttimes Toil closes them with an ominous clang. A lady of long experience and much natural optimism gave it as her opinion that the most hopeless pupil to try to teach was the girl who had left school for a year or so and was earning her living in a factory. Now we know there are factories and factories; one has heard of mills where the girls remain the bright young ladies they are when they enter; but there are others where Fate is less kind. And so it is with the boys. Many a teacher heaves a sigh of regret when he sees what certain forms of Labour make of his lads. He does his best, doubtless, to guide them into avenues that lead to something, but often the lure of the immediate dollar is too strong. Many parents cannot resist the temptation to let a lad be self-supporting—in part at least—at the earliest possible moment. Hence the blind alleys are always filled and one

more is added to the multitudes who are drudges for life.

The one comfort and consolation a teacher finds is in the fact that through his agency many a lad enters on a useful career. A country headmaster once received from one of the partners in a large shipbuilding firm the following letter :—

DEAR SIR,—Some months ago a boy from your school entered our employment. He has turned out so well that we shall always be glad to know of any other of your boys who may desire to enter our service.'

Few tokens of esteem are more cherished by teachers than those which tell of the success of 'old boys.' And at this point Youth is often indebted to others than teachers. A lad from a village goes into the world and makes a business and a name. He has a permanent interest in all lads who hail from his own countryside, and will ever lend a hand to see that they are well placed in life. It is well known that certain large firms preserve an intimate connection with the towns or villages whence came their founders. And so it should be : the motherland deserves her reward when she rears her sons well.

Sometimes, happily, there is no prison-house.

It is not inevitable. As one glory or glamour fades another takes its place. The dreams of Youth are long, long dreams ; sometimes they last, even as Youth itself seems to last, to the end. 'Whom the Gods love die young' need not indicate early mortality ; it ought to suggest rather eternal youth. Grey hairs are not inconsistent with the heart of a boy. Keats saw the dark side when he made Youth

'Grow pale, and spectre-thin and die.'

For Youth need not perish though it be changed. Not inevitably need the shades gather and the prison doors close.

CHAPTER IV

EX ORE INFANTIUM

THE domain of the teacher of English comprises three main regions, each a world in itself. Of these three worlds, the greatest and most charming is the world of speech. Not every one may enter, nor may all who enter explore every avenue. Sympathy is the passport to the main avenues, but those who would trace the loveliest by-paths must carry with them the magic keys of Tact, Good-Humour, and Love. To some is given by nature a talisman of surpassing virtue in the shape of unfading youth; others again, by dint of winning the hearts of the little ones, earn in due time this amulet, which is imperishable and cannot be filched from them.

This must not be interpreted as mere fancy. When one is a free burgess of the fair City of Childhood, he has many a worthy privilege, not least that of hearing frank and naturally expressed opinions. To the tale which follows many a teacher of infants could easily add more. In a

rural school, under the shadow of a Ducal seat, the reading-lesson had dealt with chivalry. The teacher, wishing naturally to make use of known facts and persons, called up a child, and a dialogue like this ensued :—

'Bobby, did you ever see a Duke ?'

'Aye, I 've often seen a Deuk.'

'Where did you see the Duke ?'

'In the water.'

The teacher, forgetting the Scots pronunciation in her anxiety to make a point, but remembering a recent otter-hunt at which she assumed His Grace to have been present, persisted in her inquiry :—

'What did the Duke say to you ?'

'Quack ! Quack !'

Truly out of the mouth of babes and sucklings cometh wisdom.

Here is an instance where a well-meaning Inspector of Schools was sadly discomfited :—

Scene : rural school in the south of Scotland ; Inspector talking to a very junior class about the country and country life. It occurs to him to try to discover how far such children have any conception of a city. He proceeds to tell them that he lives in a place where no birds sing, no

flowers peep in at the window, the sky is never blue, but always black and grimy, and nothing is to be seen but roofs and smoke and chimney-pots. Then, with hope in his heart, he puts the critical query : ' What would you call the place where I live ? ' And pat comes the right answer, ' The Jyle.'

At times teachers gain interesting side-lights on social and economic problems from the free talk of little ones. Discuss with a class in what is called a ' slum ' school the everyday process of washing the face, or of eating the breakfast, and you will learn much that is worth thinking about. It will be clear to you, for example, that forks and knives are not held to be essentials in all households where ham and eggs form the menu for breakfast. Only by coming to know the home environment of the child does one learn to appreciate his outlook, and thus to apply those principles which are fundamental in all teaching. Very useful and instructive are the moments a teacher spends in the play-ground, if, happily, his presence does not divert or stem the current of life that flows there. Sometimes one stumbles on pathos that is near to tragedy, as when one discovers the profound interest cripple children take in football matches, or the sad prevalence

in certain playgrounds of games in which it is possible to have a slender stake on something that vaguely represents a horse. Here is an incident full of almost sardonic pathos.

Some years ago, during a spell of unemployment, children were being fed in school, and one morning a little girl who had regularly come for breakfast was absent. When she appeared later in the day the teacher kindly inquired why she had not come for breakfast, and received the reply: 'Oh, we didn't need to come to-day; we had a good breakfast at home.' 'That 's good news, my child,' said the teacher, 'has your father got work?' 'Not yet,' came the response, 'but the horse won'!

Some of the most amusing replies given by little ones have a theological interest. On one occasion the word 'century' was being explained, and the teacher, having told her pupils that it meant a hundred years, said: 'Where shall we all be in a hundred years?' Imagine her feelings on receiving the confident rejoinder: 'In the bad burning fire.' On another occasion the lesson had dealt with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and a boy, asked to explain the reason why people strewed branches in the way, gave the curious answer: 'To trip the cuddy.'

Sometimes our children instinctively strike out a great principle in a quaint way of their own, as did the boy who came to his teacher during the darkness which preceded a thunderstorm, and whispered in an awed tone, 'Surely God must be dead.' On another occasion, when a circus visited the little country town, and one of the acrobats paraded the streets on a very high pair of stilts, a child ran home and startled her mother with the astounding information that she had seen God in the market-place. Though the following incident bears rather on logic than on theology, it is perhaps quite in place here. The teacher had just explained to her class the significance of the abbreviation 'B.C.' as 'before Christ.' Rather unwisely, perhaps, she wrote on the black-board 'A.D.,' and called for a suggestion as to its meaning. Can one wonder that an intelligent and logical boy promptly suggested 'After the Devil.'

The most remote regions often yield the richest harvest of interesting conversation. A shepherd's son had been in the city, and when asked to say what manner of place it was, he graphically and characteristically described it as 'Raws and raws o' hooses, and never a sheep to be seen.'

In many parts of our land children speak two

languages, one in school and another at home. At times the home speech is merely a debased form of the school tongue; at others it is, as in Wales and Scotland, a different language. This bi-lingualism is not always a disadvantage, but rather the opposite. The more languages one knows the more precise may be his speech. But careless and slovenly speech in any tongue is not only a serious social drawback, it is an indication of careless and slovenly thought as well. Many a man is handicapped for life by an accent acquired as a child. Examples gross as earth exhort us to care in teaching our children to hear aright, that they may speak aright. Who has not heard distortions of well-known phrases which are pathetically funny? The well-known lines of the Scots metrical paraphrase

> 'Who through this weary pilgrimage
> Hast all our fathers led.'

was once lustily sung by a boy as

> 'Who through this weary pilgrimage
> Has stole my father's leg.'

and the line of a song which should have been 'The last rose of summer,' became 'the glass doors of summer.'

We have all heard the superior person condemn

the child whom he describes as 'glib,' but surely there is some value in a ready tongue, and there is reason to doubt whether we Scots folk do not sometimes miss the mark in speech through excess of caution. Readers of Barrie will recall an episode in *Sentimental Tommy* which illustrates the point. The true teacher remembers that the fountains whence spring the rivulets of early speech are easily dried up, and he is both tender and tolerant of early efforts. If a child cannot, though ever so desirous, express his thoughts in standard English, it is surely both stupid and unkind to impose a standard so high that it thwarts the desire. Even the vernacular should be encouraged if it seems likely to be of assistance. A little child in a country school was once reciting to a sympathetic Inspector the story of Little Miss Muffet, and her memory failed her at the critical moment. But she scored a triumph when she finished, after a moment of blushing hesitation—

> 'There came a big spider,
> And sat down beside her
> And . . . *gliffed* Miss Muffet away.'

Surely the fine old Scots word was worth waiting for.

What a great deal a teacher may learn, if the little ones have their due chance to teach! The

young teacher who wisely wanders a little, in the early years of his experience, has many chances, and will, if he be awake, increase his verbal stock. He may even find incidentally, the answer to linguistic difficulties. To a boy in Gretna the writer owes the real explanation of a word which had puzzled him in *Piers Plowman*; to vagrant children he owes an interest in their speech much stimulated by M'Cormick's *Tinkler Gypsies*. A lad in Galloway added to his stock the fine word—used to describe the apostle Peter—' forritsome.' Children enjoy, and they have every right to enjoy, the ignorance of their elders. A teacher tells me he will never forget the looks of amazed incredulity on the faces of some Glasgow boys when they found themselves compelled to explain to him that a ' tally ' was their equivalent for a dealer in ice-cream. They must have been equalled by the amused smiles of the girls who had to make clear to a young Highland teacher what was meant by ' keepin' the wean,' and more specifically what a ' wean ' was !

Even in school there is occasionally an outbreak, more or less acute, of what is known as ' Bad Language.' And children have curious ideas in the matter of what is, and what is not, permissible. We shall probably never know just what these

ideas are, and we have probably forgotten our own infantile canons of decorum. In a rural school a small boy was haled before the supreme power by a shocked older sister, who explained that he had been heard using 'bad words.' The teacher, anxious to do justly, and if possible, show mercy, pressed the young culprit to tell just what he had said. At first he resolutely refused to reveal the precise nature of his misdemeanour, but in the end he yielded so far as to mutter, 'I dinna like to say it again, Miss, but if you 'll say some sweers, I 'll teil you when you come to it.' Evidently he had visions of extending his comminatory vocabulary !

On another occasion a teacher, who had heard a boy using in the playground language hardly to be called parliamentary, took him to task for it, and proceeded to inquire how he came to possess so wide and undesirable a vocabulary. With more candour than attention to idiom, the urchin vouchsafed the information, 'Please, Sir, my father teached me ! ' It is surely a most natural thing that a boy should desire to try the effect of words he has heard without understanding, though it is undeniable that the effect now and then surpasses expectations, and produces strange results. As happened on an occasion when a

country dominie was entertaining some guests, and his youngest hopeful, aged three, entered the room, surveyed an older brother with a critical eye, and made the calm comment, ' Man, Willie, ye 're an ugly auld bitch.'

Children differ enormously in fluency and facility of speech. It is sadly true that in some houses—they cannot be homes—the main object in life for the poor child is to get out of the way. That is why some little ones reach school age without having acquired anything of real speech at all. Their talk is monosyllabic, and confined almost entirely to the mere use of names To give language to such as these is surely to perform a great work, and to the thoughtful man the Infant school in a poor district is a perpetual miracle. Nowhere can the civilising influence of a school be better seen than in the contrast between the mute dulness of many of the babies and the bright conversation of the senior scholars.

It would be quite impossible to give undue emphasis to the supreme place training in speech ought to occupy in every school. The old Romans thought so highly of this necessity that they used to engage some of the best actors and orators to give instruction in speech. One wonders now

many Members of the Mother of Parliaments to-day would serve as exemplars.

One of the changes that distinguish the twentieth century from the nineteenth is found in the lack of ceremony which marks the conversation between Youth and Age. It need not—and it rarely does—indicate any falling-off in respect for elders. The youth of to-day who has no scruples about scoring off his father in an argument or in 'ragging' him as good-naturedly as he would one of his school chums, may nevertheless cherish quite as deep a regard for him as ever did the punctiliously respectful young man of the Victorian age for his worthy sire.

And something of the same friendliness and brotherliness to-day marks the relation between teacher and pupil. The days when the master did not speak save *ex cathedra* are happily gone. Snobbery is dying out in school, and also—let us hope—out of it. For the teacher always runs the risk of becoming a snob of the first rank, forced as he is by circumstances to spend most of his day among those whom he regards as his inferiors. The teacher must needs be a psychologist if he would escape unscathed. He learns that children are never really stupid; he discovers that often enough they can give him a Roland for his Oliver.

A certain callow and 'dressy' youth began his professional career in a Boys' School and made the fatal mistake of 'talking down' to his charges. He was fond of regaling them with autobiographical anecdotes, to their ill-concealed disgust. One afternoon he entertained them with an account of a woodland walk, wherein he had been charmed by the company of a squirrel which, as he averred, had followed him 'for several miles.' 'Perhaps, Sir,' interposed a mild youth, 'it took you for a "nut."'

Even the clergy are not exempt from criticism. A little girl, who had been to church, was discussing the service with an elderly friend, and her prattle ran thus: 'Do you bow in your church? We bow a whole lot; I get a crick in my neck with bowing. Then the minister tells us a story; he calls it a prayer.'

Sometimes, by reason of their strict veracity, children create a difficult situation. A little girl was invited, along with her parents, to dinner. She was told beforehand that the dinner would be something to remember, and doubtless had based her anticipations on the Arabian Nights. The evening arrived, and during the dinner she looked rather plaintively at her mother, and remarked in an injured but perfectly audible tone:

'I thought you said we should get a good dinner here, mother; we get a far better dinner at home.'

The spirit of old comedy is not dead; the unexpected has still its charm. And with children it is always just round the corner.

CHAPTER V

LIONS IN THE PATH

THERE are as many ways of teaching English as there are good teachers of it, but these ways lead to three main ends. We desire that our children should be able to speak good English, to write good English, and to read, appreciate, and love what is best in our English literature. 'But,' remarks the precise critic, 'what is good English?' And it is none too easy to answer him. Perhaps it may be enough in the meantime to define it as the clear unambiguous expression of thought in words appropriate to the occasion. Naturally one speaks as one is spoken to, and one very great lion in the teacher's path is the existence of an out-of-school vernacular. We must not forget, however, that the lion in the path of the pupil is even larger, and he stands, or, like Apollyon, straddles, in a narrower way.

In a certain Western isle a visitor called at the Manse. The door was opened by a maid-servant so typically Highland that the caller ad-

dressed her in Gaelic, and learned that neither the minister nor his wife was at home. So she went her way. Later in the day, when the mistress had returned, the maid intimated that a 'person' had called. 'Was it a lady?' queried the mistress. 'Oh no, Mem, she wass not a leddy; she had the Gaelic,' was the reply. It is curious and interesting that those who speak a vernacular or a dialect are often reluctant to admit their ability to use it. In his book on the Tinkler Gypsies, Mr. M'Cormick tells us that children almost always professed complete ignorance of any Romany words, and he could arrive at the truth of the matter only by strategy. So it is with even Scots in Scottish schools; the teacher who uses a Scots word nearly always arouses a smile. Yet bi-lingualism need not necessarily be a hindrance to either pupil or teacher. It ought often to be a real help. Every teacher of German in Scotland must have found the kinship between the two tongues a help rather than a hindrance. With the vernacular no one need quarrel; some of us love it, and we fervently hope the day is far distant when Burns will be unintelligible. It is commonly said that dialects are doomed, but they are city-dwellers who say so, and they do not know how strong is the vitality of any speech that is rooted

in the soil. One has only to go beyond the limit of the smoke-zones in Scotland or in England to hear a speech that is old, indeed, but far from moribund.

All who have the interests of Youth at heart, however, do have a very serious quarrel with the common speech of most of our cities, both in England and in Scotland, for the simple reason that as a general rule it is both grammatically and phonetically incorrect and slovenly. On such speech we must wage a warfare long, relentless, and unceasing.

In the course of our campaign we must point out as clearly as we possibly can the supreme practical value of clear, fluent, and grammatical speech. Recent critics of our educational system have had very hard things to say of the manner of speech which prevails among the young folks who have just left our elementary schools. One remarks that children have a certain degree of fluency at seven, but none of it remains at fourteen. He attributes the failure to the lack of opportunity for speech in school, and he is not far wrong. And the blame lies not with the teacher of English alone. For every teacher in school, whatever be his or her subject, is responsible in this grave matter, because every teacher has, if he cares to use them, many opportunities of seeing

that his pupils learn to make free use of their mother tongue. It is quite conceivable that the teacher of Cookery or of Gymnastics may incidentally bestow on her pupils inestimable benefit by setting before them at all times a model of English speech so attractive as simply to compel imitation. For English is not really a subject of instruction at all ; it is, if one may risk a scientific metaphor, the matrix wherein is embedded the variably constituted conglomerate we call instruction. Every lesson given is an English lesson, and the fact should be most scrupulously remembered by all who teach. Each lesson as it comes carries with it the opportunity for training in English speech.

We concern ourselves with English in school for three main reasons—we speak it, we read it, and we write it. Some of us read more than we speak, others—possibly the majority—speak more than they either read or write ; a few, perhaps, write more than they speak. What is one to do ? Should one aim mainly at speech, at reading, or at writing ? Surely it needs no argument to show that from the earliest stages, and all through the course, we ought by all means to lay the chief stress on speech. The child who can speak with ease and accuracy is seldom at a loss either in

reading or in writing. In tackling the problem of speech the teacher is in many cases following the bold plan of attacking the enemies' forces at their strongest point in the opening campaign. In many schools children enter the Infant room not only unable to speak anything that could be called English, but barely able to understand it when they hear it spoken. Not, of course, that these children lack a vocabulary of a sort, but too often its component words would startle the unwary teacher who unduly encouraged fluency.

The problem is a dual one and a most interesting one at that. On the one hand it is necessary, in the short school day, to wage a successful offensive against the opposing forces of the vernacular of home and street. On the other we must contrive to give these little ones the opportunity to use the correct speech they learn in school to such an extent that it becomes second nature to them. Our children will never learn to speak if they do not have the chance they ought. And it is extremely doubtful if they do. A very sensible headmaster said recently that he thought of forbidding his staff to do any teaching for a whole month, in order that the children might have a chance to learn to speak. Now no child will speak if he be unhappy or bored ; yet

speech is a form of activity most natural and attractive to the average child. The child speaks only where he feels quite at home ; and he ought to feel like that in school. Sometimes he does, and then the problem solves itself. To put the matter in a nutshell, the free intercourse that exists between teacher and child is the real training in English. At first the teacher, who, of the two people concerned, alone possesses English speech, must needs do most of the speaking, but the share he takes should be a steadily diminishing quantity. As time goes on, his part becomes merely that of the skilful steersman who guides the craft of adventure in the uncharted sea of speech past the rocks and shoals that beset the way. Formal lessons in speech have their value, but they are a feeble substitute for free intercourse. It is curious how little use is habitually made in school of a child's innate love of interrogation. If the teacher cares to try the experiment of setting aside an odd hour for the asking and answering of questions by the pupils, while he becomes, for once, the interested auditor, he will wonder why no child has ever said in his own way what Juvenal so aptly asks :—

> 'Semper ego auditor tantum, numquamne reponam,
> Vexatus toties rauci Theseide Cordi ?'

Recent years have certainly seen a most hopeful spirit of inquiry and experiment in schools. Things are done, and well and wisely done, that would have made some of the old pedagogues use language not to be found in school-books. Children engage in debates, and mock-trials, and even mock Parliamentary elections in the classroom; they have speechdays of their own, and even act plays of their own devising. For so we combat the adverse influences that external environment maintains, and so we try to give our children the chance to use their own great language.

The battle is only begun, and that for a very sound reason. Till our own day, those who taught in schools had often themselves had little or no training in speech. Now the blind cannot lead the blind, and in not a few schools the greatest lion in the path of the child was the teacher. The model set in speech was too often a very bad one, and to that more than to any other cause may we attribute the fact that a 'Board-School' boy could always be distinguished from a 'Public-School' boy. An amusing, but painful tale is told of a teacher in a school in Scotland, in a region where the medial consonant '*t*' is habitually omitted in vulgar speech. In the neighbourhood in question 'Butter' is pronounced 'Bu'er,'

and ' Water,' ' Wa'er.' The class was at a reading lesson, and a boy read the word ' Letter ' as if it had been ' Le'er.' The teacher made him repeat the phrase in which the error had occurred. The boy did so, correcting the mispronunciation. ' Yes,' said the teacher, ' that 's be'er ! '

It is probably true that the child, in his endeavour to acquire something like standard English speech, is often handicapped by his home conditions. Some folks rather pride themselves on their boorish ways and uncouth speech, and they look askance on any efforts made by their children to ' rise above their station ' in the matter of speech. One could easily imagine the disgust with which Rogue Riderhood would view his daughter's efforts to improve on the model of speech he set her. And Dickens was only drawing in *Our Mutual Friend* the riverside life that he knew, and that exists to-day with fewer modifications in this respect than one might well desire. In Scotland the use of English in ordinary conversation was for many a day, and is yet to some extent, regarded as a mark of pride and conceit. Without doubt some children, when they try to use at home the speech they acquire in school, do so at their peril. There is at least one highly-educated graduate in Scotland who dare not, at home, use

any tongue but his native Gaelic if he would escape stern parental rebuke. But without doubt it is good to be able to use two tongues freely, and if fuller opportunity were given in schools for the practice which is so necessary in learning to speak English, there would be less need to disparage the vulgar forms of speech. For, apart from their grammatical inaccuracy, and perhaps even to some extent because of it, they have a certain appeal of their own. Else why would folks throng to hear Albert Chevalier and Sir Harry Lauder ?

While all of us speak English, most of us, if not all, also read it. For that reason our children must acquire the art of Reading. To some of them the task is so light that it can hardly be called a task at all. To others it is a very toil of Sisyphus. Many of us have no recollection of having learned to read ; we cannot remember a time when, for us, there were no such things as books. O Fortunati ! But there are thousands of children who never see a book out of school, and never really read one in school. It is much to be feared that the same might unfortunately be said of many teachers. For, alas ! school reading is a thing apart. If one looks at the school-books of a century ago one must be struck

by their unusual difficulty. In Scotland up to the middle of last century the Bible was the principal book in use in many schools, and later its place was taken by various ' Collections ' full of the most solid fare. The aim of Reading in those days was certainly to give instruction. Then came the days when it was necessary for each child to prove to the Government, as represented by His Majesty's Inspectors, that he or she could read. Hence it came about that the end and object of a child's reading in school was to prove orally that he could read the passage, whether or not it conveyed any meaning to his mind. From this arose the almost universal habit of having every lesson, however slight its literary value, read aloud by the pupils in turn, each reading a few lines. If the pupil cared to read the lesson at home, well and good, but that was not required, so long as he could spell orally the words of any difficulty in it. To this end, kind publishers provided lists of the hard words, and there was no need to read the text through at all. Reading aloud in school gave proof of ability to pronounce the words in the lesson, and that was the end of the matter. Not much joy in that, in truth ! Now there is very vital need for reading aloud in school, but not for purely demonstrative purposes ;

rather that the child may learn that his language is at times a thing of the most exquisite beauty.

Reading aloud is an art few people cultivate, yet it may give very great pleasure to others. Who can forget Bret Harte's fine poem, ' Dickens in Camp ' ? Every child loves to listen to stories, and in default of a story told, he loves a story read. So it behoves every teacher to be a good reader of stories, for telling stories well is to some extent a gift, though Miss S. C. Bryant has written two books which will help those who wish to learn the art. There used to be a book called *Reading Without Tears* ; perhaps it still exists. What a tragedy of mistaken endeavour the wise man may read in the title. What has Reading to do with tears ? There has been too little joy in the reading lessons of our children, for various reasons. For one thing, the lessons found in school-books are often the dreariest things in print. At least they used to be. Not every publisher of a school-book is able to provide good reading matter, especially at the earlier stages, for much of the best reading material is still in copyright. What the teacher has to do, and to do as speedily as possible, if he has the child's best interest at heart, is to give him the power to read on his own account. Then, and only then, can he be said to begin

to read. Of course, at the earliest stages—all through the Infant room—most of the reading will be reading aloud. But not all. A child loves to be given an order or a request in print, which he may translate in thought and obey in action. Bad as our alphabet is, it can still lead the child in an interesting way, from the written symbol to the idea underlying. Sometimes the spoken word comes into the chain, but not necessarily. Sooner or later the child reaches a very critical point in his intellectual life. He comes to the parting of the ways, and it is decided, once for all in most cases, whether he shall pursue the pleasant way of Reading or the bare and forlorn track of 'Reading a Book.' To read a book is, alas, all that some poor children ever learn. They never learn to read, and there is all the difference in the world.

Here is a passage from an essay by 'Alpha of the Plough':—

'In the city of Glasgow I believe that over 60 per cent. of the population live in one- or two-roomed tenements. How can you expect them to grow the fine flowers of literature in those conditions? How can children learn to love the things of the mind contained in books amidst the

squalor of a two-roomed tenement, with the doorstep as a playground? It can't be done. Literature is closed to them from their birth. They are shut out from the kingdom, and when they emerge to manhood it is the glitter of the streets and the shallow appeal of the "pictures" for which alone they have an appetite.'

Is it so bad as this? God forbid! The picture is too black. Children in one-roomed tenements *have* learned to love, and *are* learning to love the things of the mind contained in books. All honour to those who help them on the hard upward path! Honour, too, to those brave souls who have triumphed over adverse environment and risen to the full joy of what William Watson calls 'the things that are more excellent.' It would be quite easy to instance cases where, from some insignificant and sordid miners' village, quite a group of scholars has sprung—men who rose from two-roomed houses to considerable eminence. And whose is the credit? Always, assuredly, the major share must go to the home, but no small part remains to be set to the honour of the teacher, whose inspiration must have been a compelling force.

One sometimes hears it said that poor children

have no time to read. It is not true. If the desire be there the time will be found somehow. To create the desire is no easy matter; sometimes it is a sheer impossibility, but, if the effort be made early enough, one has always some hope. Let a boy do without reading till he is twelve or thirteen, and the battle is lost for ever.

CHAPTER VI

DE LIBRIS ET LIBERIS

CAN we teach children to love books? If we can, are we doing it? Questions these which every teacher sooner or later is bound to ask, whether he may be able to answer or not.

Let lovers of books ask themselves how they came to love them. The answer will vary almost with the individual, although one or two points of common interest may emerge. For one thing, most of us who love books have always had books; we have grown up among them. So we can answer the question only in part. What of those who, as children, had no books or but few? How did they acquire the love of them? Probably with nine men out of ten the love can be traced to the influence of some one person—teacher, or companion, or employer. The tenth man has perhaps inherited the desire to read without inheriting the means to gratify it. But of all influences that may lead one to read, that of school is one

of the strongest. If only the school misses none of its chances !

Even before he can read, a child may learn to value a book, knowing it to be the treasury whence come good stories, fine songs, and pleasant rhymes, to say nothing of interesting pictures. Of recent years publishers have vied with one another in making school-books beautiful to the eye. The whole art of illustration is brought into play, sometimes to such an extent as to run the risk of obscuring the real object of the book. Yet it is certain that these fine pictures are not always permitted to serve to the full the purpose for which they were drawn. Often enough the teacher is so anxious about the mere mechanical process of reading that the whole spirit of the lesson—which, of course, breathes in the illustrations—may be missed. Some books for school-children are sheer drill-books, which do not pretend to have either interest or meaning, but are drawn up on strictly scientific lines, with a phonetic aim. Perhaps they have their place in the mere mechanics of the reading lesson ; they certainly have none in the Art of Reading. Their season should be mercifully short, if indeed it need come at all. When a child can take up a story-book and discover for himself what it is all about, his feet are

set in the way. If only we permit them to travel in it! A child in a good home, where books are in constant use, will read, between tea-time and bedtime, a book on which his less fortunate fellows in some schools would be compelled to spend six months! In other words, some poor children are 'fed' for months on fare which ought to go to a single decent meal! And we talk of an 'educated democracy'! The late W. T. Stead did a great work when he published *Books for the Bairns*, at one penny each. True, John Ruskin would have been scandalised by the paper and print, to say nothing of the flimsy paper covers, but the matter was good and the books were cheap. Many a teacher had reason to be thankful for such a boon, especially in the days when School Boards were generous with stone and lime at the expense of reading material. We cannot help children to read if we have no books to give them, and books cost money. Ruskin charges us as a nation with despising books. Perhaps he would have been as near the truth if he had said that as a nation we were too ignorant of books even to despise them. How can a child who has no books at home, and is rarely left alone with one in school, be said to despise books? In this matter the nation is still in its childhood.

We are not too illiterate to read the newspapers, or a tale in a magazine, or the necessary *legenda* in a picture-house, but it cannot be said that we read books. If the opinion of the Head of any large Secondary School were asked, he would affirm that while, of course, his pupils read the good books they were made to read, only the very few indeed could be found reading on their own account in anything like the same plane of literature. And the same is probably true of our universities.

It is easy to talk about leading a horse to the water and failing to make him drink ; but it is not apposite. For as often as not there is no water. For those very children whose need is greatest we have not books enough. Every school in the land ought to have in every classroom a library of suitable books. Even at the modest rate of one book per child per annum this would give each child in an average class the choice of some forty or fifty books in the year. And this is done in some schools by a kind of co-operative effort. Each child pays for a book, and at the end of the session carries home the book, which has meantime been in the class library. No simpler plan could well be devised, if only the choice of books be wisely made. And the choice

must be thoroughly catholic. If a boy will read nothing but a ' Blood-and-thunder ' story, well and good. He may rise from Sexton Blake to Edgar Allan Poe. If a girl will tolerate nothing but a ' love tale with a strong domestic interest ' she may nevertheless rise to Jane Austen and George Eliot. Most children are willing to read something, if only the right something can be found. Even the report of a football match as given in the ' Sports ' edition of an evening paper, may serve a useful purpose in school. It may at the least provide striking examples of how English is not written.

The enthusiastic teacher is never happier than when he discovers a dawning interest in books in a pupil whom he has so far regarded as insusceptible to the charm of letters. He supplements the slender school stock with volumes of his own, and thus fosters the tiny flame. And he has his reward. The lad who leaves school with an interest in books may be trusted to get through life without great risk of disaster. He may not ' get on ' in the financial sense—few bookmen do—but he will have a stand-by for life.

Sometimes a single book exercises a wonderful influence on a boy's life. The writer still cherishes —in a handsome new binding—a book given him

some forty years ago as a school prize. It is called *Pictures from English Literature*, and it tells in simple language, with frequent divagations into the original text, some of the great tales in our language, ranging from Chaucer's Griselda and Spenser's Una, through Comus and Falstaff, Tristram Shandy and Haidée, down to Jeanie Deans, Colonel Newcome, and Pecksniff. Such a book, coming in a boy's way at the right moment, makes all the difference in the world. And the publishers of to-day are doing fine work in providing for our children such samples of fine work as will impel the readers to ask for more.

The greatest boon a teacher of English can confer on a child is to teach him to speak his own great language correctly and with confidence. Second in importance to this alone is the opportunity that comes to all teachers to lead their pupils a little way into the world of books. And it comes to all teachers, for there is no single branch of education but has its classic. We do not all read the same books, for our interests are diverse, but we may all read good books, and no part of a teacher's equipment is more useful than his acquaintance with good books on all sorts of subjects. Most students remember with gratitude a set of volumes—found in every university

library—known as *Poole's Index to Current Literature*. To many a man Poole was a veritable gold mine, for it referred him to all the best things that had recently been written on every conceivable subject on which he might be called on to write an essay. All teachers ought to be in a way living editions of Poole. They should have made a study of the Literature of Childhood and Adolescence, so that they may act as guides. They should know enough to condemn and discard any selection in a reading-book that is not worth its place there. Even if some books were in the process reduced to emaciated skeletons, no harm would be done. Every school reader is an anthology, and it is to be feared that in the old days teachers accepted without demur the fare another man provided, reading through in exact order every lesson—good, bad, and indifferent. No wonder the pupils suffered at times from acute literary dyspepsia! Now there is no objection to miscellaneous fare, but all lessons do not deserve the same treatment. Some lessons are ephemeral trifles, to be read and enjoyed for the moment; others are possessions for all time, to be chewed, digested, and assimilated. They may be hard, but the labour has its reward. There is no more real joy for a teacher than may be had

from an experiment with an ordinary reading-book. Here is the recipe. First, choose your lesson and see that it is a good one and worthy of study. It must contain what will genuinely interest the children, provided they can reach the proper point of view. Consider carefully whether it requires discussion, and, if so, how it had best be treated. Examine the text and try to anticipate the chief difficulties that may arise. In short, give the lesson a chance. Let it be one indivisible whole and deal with it at one sitting. Put heart and soul into it, letting yourself 'go.' Then, at the end, try calmly to assess the result in terms of emotion. Did the eyes of the children fill with tears? Did they shine with admiration, or blaze with anger or contempt? Did the smile break at the right places and the laugh ripple at the right moment? For by these and such signs and tokens you will know if you have done well. And failing, as perchance you may, you will learn much in honestly trying to trace the failure to its source.

Can a teacher instil into his pupils a liking for good books? It is an open question, but of this there is no doubt whatever; it is possible for a teacher so to maltreat a good book that his pupils will hate the name of it for ever after. Is there

really a spell that will charm our children into the world of fine books? Surely it would be a joy indeed to use it! Alas! there is none one can name. Let the lover of good books try to say how he came to love them, and he will find the task a hard one. Perhaps books surrounded him as a child; perhaps some older brother or sister read to him at bedtime; perhaps he heard his father read aloud for his own pleasure; perhaps his teacher gave odd hours to teaching a class to listen to a good book as they would listen to a good piece of music. It is largely conjecture, and mainly a matter of chance happenings. Yet how much the love of books means in a life! Surely the teacher who fosters it must reap a lasting joy!

A single word on Literature. It cannot be taught, for it is too near the heart. But the love of literature can be inspired, and no higher joy is to be achieved by the teacher of English. If one seek to know the precise qualifications which will gain for the teacher this supreme joy, he will find them rather hard to define. Not scholarship, which may obscure, nor brilliant elocutionary powers, which will distort, nor intellectual and critical acumen, which disconcert. Rather is there need of apparently simple qualities, viz.:

a heart that feels, and a voice that can express the feeling.

Allied to the world of Speech and the world of Books is the world of Action. 'All the world 's a stage,' and our schools may well be microcosms. Drama has from the most ancient times been a mighty force in the world of men. Than that of Shakespeare England knows no greater name. And when we recall the rude equipment of the Elizabethan stage, we need not despair of using the drama to good purpose in school. Children love make-believe, and are never happier than when acting as Dramatis Personae in playlets of their own devising. This principle we recognise by our free use of games in the Infant classes. A young and enthusiastic Inspector of Schools met with a stern rejoinder from the lips of an austere old lady in a remote country school. After witnessing some of the more serious activities of the little ones, he put the bland query: 'Do you play any games in school?' 'No, Sir,' was the acidulous reply, 'my children do not come to school to play!'

Unfortunately much of the delight and revel of motion characteristic of a good Infant Department tends to disappear later. The active expression of feeling might surely be preserved a

little longer, even at the cost of a rule or two in Arithmetic, or a fact or two in History. No better form of activity can be devised than the acting of simple plays. And even the writing of them may fall within the scope of the children. If Shakespeare borrowed his plots, so may we, and it has been proved that a class may rise to a high pitch of enthusiasm and attain a full measure of delight in the performance of a drama of its own creation. History yields plots in abundance. Horatius, Robin Hood, Raleigh, and Sidney spring to the imagination as suitable heroes ; Iphigeneia, Nausicaa, Joan of Arc, and Florence Nightingale as proper heroines. The making of a play may be a useful study for weeks, and its performance often proves a firm bond to unite pupil, teacher, and parent. The actual performance is an excellent training not only in speech, but in movement and in general management. Shakespeare's plays are never all they can be to boys and girls till they have been acted in class. And there is no need to limit the range to Shakespeare. Many an ordinary reading lesson will be more effective dramatised, and the conversion of ordinary narrative prose to dialogue forms a fine exercise for children. How charming a scene could be made from Kenneth Grahame's *Golden Age*, or from

Dream Days! How well the old ballads of Scotland lend themselves to dramatic treatment! And may we not thus reproduce bits of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, to say nothing of Scott or Ramsay or Burns? Not every teacher has the gift of stage management, but there is no need of elaborate stage-craft, and most teachers will find it easy to devise little experiments in Drama which will bring lasting joy to pupil and teacher alike.

School Libraries are often strange collections. Our grandfathers believed in solid stuff, and even our fathers insisted on books with an 'improving' tone. To-day we can perhaps gauge better the taste of youth, and we must have regard to it if we would have our books read at all. If a volume remains unread on accessible shelves for a year, it is taking up space that ought to be better filled, no matter how good a book it may be. Unfortunately, many books of recent date are too dear to be put on the shelves of the average school library. Fiction of sorts—some of it of a good sort—is cheap enough, but fiction is not all. Biography worth reading is expensive; so are good books of travel. In short, one is faced with the choice between a small collection of good books and a larger collection of mainly second-

rate stuff. The choice should be easy. Children are excellent critics, and will unerringly choose the good book rather than the poor one. Hundreds of pounds are spent annually in giving to children books they will never read. Publishers advertise books ' suitable for school prizes ' : many of them apparently fit for nothing else ! Yet where prizes are given the selector has a great opportunity. A well-chosen prize may make a boy a reader, nay, even a buyer, of good books. For children do buy books. Every newsagent in the poorer quarter of a city stocks libraries of ' Dreadfuls.' Not that they are so dreadful after all. The writer has read scores of them—and still reads them—with interest. They do far more good than harm. One wonders whether those grave magistrates who fulminate against such volumes ever sit down after dinner and read one or two. It would be good for them. One very sensible teacher not only does not confiscate them—as our masters always did—but encourages every boy to carry a book and read it in his spare minutes in school. He finds that the boy who is anxious to resume an engrossing tale makes good speed with his work, and careful speed, knowing the penalty for carelessness to lie in the way of confiscation.

Our children must have some say in what they are to read; and we older folks need not be too timorous from the moral standpoint. The boy who browses in a good library may come across things that are in a way dangerous, but life is full of risks, and we cannot escape them in literature. If that were the only trouble!

CHAPTER VII

MIMETICS

EVERY one admits that imitation is one of the strongest instincts in life, and educational philosophers have, as a rule, given the tendency due place in their arguments. At the same time one finds teachers whose motto seems to be 'Don't do as I do, but do as I tell you.' Such teachers are never successful, for children find it more natural to imitate than to act on instructions. And they frequently imitate precisely the wrong things. When Royalty develops a limp, Fashion is apt to follow suit. So the teacher cursed with any eccentricity or peculiarity runs the grave risk of passing on an oddity to others. In no other profession does personality count for so much. It matters little if a doctor have a limp, or a dentist an atrocious accent, but in the teacher every atom of personality counts, and counts all the time. A country School Board once framed a Memorial deploring the lack of manners and the rude accent prevailing among the children in their area, and

laying the blame at the door of the poor dominie ; they were very sensibly told by a candid critic that they could hardly expect to find the Oxford manner so long as they continued to pay their teacher at the rate of only £120 a year. Very amusing tales are told of some of the members of rural School Boards, tales which assuredly emphasise the need for more widespread education. One School Board Chairman was, it is said, so unfamiliar with the art of penmanship that, when the Clerk informed him, at the end of a long meeting, that he had still half a dozen cheques to sign, he angrily remonstrated : ' Good Heavens ! Clerk, what for did ye no tell me that afore ? Ye 'll ha'e me here a' nicht.' Like Master, like Man. So long as the choice of teacher lay—as it too often did—with the unlettered, it was hardly to be wondered at that little success as a rule attended the selection. Sir Roger de Coverley was not exceptional in his reluctance to have a real scholar in the parish. A canny and clear-headed old Scot was advising his son, a budding dominie, with respect to an application he was making to a School Board for a vacant post. ' And see ye write it oot weel, Bob, for geyan likely it 'll be the only thing the bodies are in ony sort or fashion able to judge.'

Children inevitably copy their elders. A man's footstep may be quite indistinguishable from that of his son, though both are easily distinguishable from all others. A school, especially a small one, is ethically determined by its Head. Any one who has known and watched the history and development of a small school will vouch for the fact that the type of teacher fixes the type of pupil for the time of his sojourn. In large schools the same holds good so long as the Head is a real Head, who comes actually into close personal contact with pupils and with staff. Unfortunately, some modern schools—thanks to the high cost of land in cities—are so very large that it seems highly questionable whether the Head could recognise each member of his staff by sight! In such cases there comes into action, happily, a new force, viz.: Tradition or School Form. Every large school has its Identification Discs by which old boys without fail recognise each other. These may be marks of speech, or of bearing, or even of dress. Every Public School, great or small, has its own private slang. Winchester speaks not the language of Eton, nor Rugby that of Marlborough. In matters of speech children are highly conservative, as we may see from a study of their rhymes for use in games, which tend to retain

the pristine form in a high state of purity. Every one who tells stories to small children knows what sticklers they are for verbal accuracy and rigid adherence to original forms. So is it with school forms and ceremonies. The British School may not have a written Constitution any more than the British Empire, but it has a strong safeguard of established precedent. The mere existence of such a poem as Newbolt's 'Vitai Lampada' speaks volumes for the value of School Tradition.

Where a uniform system of training teachers is in vogue, one must expect to find a uniformity in schools. In the old parish schools of Scotland many headmasters were graduates of a Scottish university, while others had spent some time in one, and the universities had a pretty uniform and stereotyped course. The result was the production of many pupils of a quite definite type. The 'lad o' pairts,' so dear to the novelist, was intellectually almost a mathematical constant, and only with the widening of the Arts curriculum (for better or worse) has the type been changed.

A very interesting question arises in this connection, viz., that of the relation between the type of population generally and the type of teacher who is likely to be found most suitable. It has often been argued that the teacher should be somewhat akin in general bearing to the type

of parent with whose children he has to deal. While there may be something in the contention, it cannot be accepted as axiomatic. Humanity does not run, like rocks, in strata. Great souls like Chaucer and Shakespeare and Browning could claim kinship with all types, and the same is true of all great teachers. They have the keys that unlock all hearts. As Burns puts it —

> 'The heart's aye the part aye
> That maks us richt or wrang.'

The heart is more important in life than the head, as the writer of the Proverbs so pointedly reminds us when he bids us 'keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.'

And as a child imitates his elders in speech and garb and gesture, so he, more or less consciously, adopts, temporarily at least, something of their outlook on life. If the teacher makes an idol of intellect, so will his pupils. Burns knew his man when he wrote his Epitaph on the schoolmaster of Cleish parish, Kinross-shire :—

> 'Here lie Willie Michie's banes;
> O Satan, when ye tak him,
> Give him the schulin' o' your weans,
> For clever deils he 'll mak them!'

Probably such a teacher would be quite ready to

overlook any parental tendencies in consideration of apparent outstanding intellectual qualities! Where the teacher makes a god of pure intellect he is apt to mislead his pupils in their perspective of life. They admire what he admires—until age makes them wiser.

Not that intellect is a bad thing; there are many worse, and the man who causes a whole community to admire and seek for intellectual eminence does a great work. It is very curious to note just how such an influence works in a generation or two. One can remember places where a Secondary School was literally forced on an apparently unwilling population in the teeth of strenuous opposition. The good work began in a mutter of sinister and gloomy forebodings; but it always throve. The supply actually created the demand, and the new generation regarded as a natural necessity what its predecessor had stigmatised as an expensive and unnecessary fad.

Nor is it in school alone that regard must be had to the mimetic tendency. Children imitate all in whom they are interested, and especially all who have about them anything of the outré. Here is a story with a moral. A little boy of six had been made happy with a big sheet of paper and a pencil. Ensconced under the table, he

busied himself ' writing a story.' Bedtime came, and, after a few minutes' grace, he was reluctantly dragged from his retreat. When he had gone, his father picked up the young author's manuscript. It read thus :—' A bad witch lived in a wood and a little boy went in to get some berries. He saw her coming and . . . I have to go to bed damn.' Perhaps the excellent spelling atoned in some measure for the closing profanity. In any case the moral is obvious. Heredity is great indeed.

Happily it is no harder to imitate the good than the bad, and children appear to do both with equal address. In Scotland we speak of a child being ' a causey saint but a hoose deevil.' Many a child whose reputation in the family circle is far from saintly is a model of deportment in school, and one is almost tempted to venture the theory that where home environment is strongly adverse the novelty of being good in school has an added charm. Children are odd fish ; when it seems desirable that they should be unusually good they generally elect to be preternaturally naughty. Probably they feel that the quality of goodness is akin to that of mercy in being incapable of strain. There is a fine tale of a little girl who was fond of frequenting the stables, thereby incidentally in-

creasing to a somewhat undesirable extent her vocabulary. An uncle, a high dignitary in the church, was due on a visit, and the stables were placed under a specially strict taboo. Evading supervision and defying the taboo she paid a visit, much to the sorrow of her mother, who discovered her *in flagrante delicto*. The Bishop, on his arrival, was consulted, and consented to deal with the erring damsel. Seizing an opportune moment, he said, 'Betty, my child, I hear you have been visiting the stables again.' Betty admitted the fact, adding, 'But who told you I had been there?' 'Ah!' replied His Grace, 'a little bird whispered it to me.' Betty looked a little incredulous at first, but finally shrugged her little shoulders, tossed her head, and sarcastically remarked, 'Oh! One of these damned sparrows, I suppose!'

In nothing more fully than in speech do children copy their elders. The very tone is faithfully reproduced, and a child 'playing at school' gives perhaps the finest possible comment on the school she—it is usually a 'she'—attends. No parent whose child possesses the mimetic instinct in a strong degree requires to read the school prospectus in order to discover what goes on there. In the bad old days a child used to 'play at school' by arranging a number of chairs to represent pupils;

then she proceeded, without further preliminaries, to administer a sound whipping to each. It is not inconceivable that the Old Lady who lived in a Shoe is but a symbol of the overtaxed and undertrained Dame of the old days. To such as she was, Peace came only when the children had all been soundly whipped and sent to bed. The curious thing is that generations of children have enjoyed the rhyme and even laughed with glee over the promiscuous whipping. The normal boy much prefers a stroke or two to an imposition or a lecture. The 'flagrant injustice,'—to quote Kipling—brings a whipping into the same category as earthquakes or plague or tempest—what shipping companies term 'the act of God,'—and the victim bows his head and accepts Fate. But a lecture, especially one with a strongly moral bias, is another story. Violence is an external force, but homiletics are a distortion of familiar discourse, and so intolerable.

Perhaps the most important inference to be drawn from the high importance of the mimetic instinct is that the most valuable teaching is the incidental. Every one who has spent happy years in teaching must have encountered former pupils who said they had been deeply impressed by incidents or items of instruction which the teacher

had utterly forgotten, or remembered as casual *obiter dicta* Thus a Classical teacher was astounded to learn that some incidental criticism he had passed on Pierre Corneille had influenced the whole career of a boy who heard it. Every teacher does good by stealth, unknown to himself. And it could not be otherwise, for the teacher is like a man at the end of a telegraph wire ; he knows what message he sends, but he cannot tell precisely what may be received. And every moment of his day he is teaching—good or ill. It may still be an open question whether virtue can be taught ; it is incontrovertible that happiness can be communicated, and the glad moments we give our children are those that count. John Masefield is right when he says, in his poem entitled 'Biography' :—

> 'Best trust the happy moments. What they gave
> Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,
> And gives his work compassion and new eyes.
> The days that make us happy make us wise.'

Before one can disseminate happiness one must himself be happy, and it follows that only happy teachers can completely fulfil their aim in life. Worry is the bane of a teacher's life, and the acquisition of real calm ought to be his supreme achievement. Critics sometimes indulge in cheap

sneers about school 'atmosphere.' But it is a very real and very vital matter, and depends on a vast number of component forces. The ideal of every school is the performance of good work in a happy spirit :—

> 'And with joy the stars perform their shining,
> And the sea its long moon-silvered roll.'

If even Arnold could find joy in the gleam of the stars and the roll of the waves, surely there is joy for all of us in the happy tasks that Youth imposes and shares.

Philosophers assert that attention is most powerful when involuntary, *i.e.* one attends most fully when he would rather not, but cannot help himself. So it is with imitation. The involuntary imitation of a happy and cultured life means infinitely more than the deliberate copying of any whims or 'particularities' one's exemplar may happen to possess.

To the lover of children nothing is more delightful than to feel that, consciously or not, they are travelling onwards in life on a path that will lead them to the 'sweetness and light,' which are the apex of their earthly way.

CHAPTER VIII

CRAMBE REPETITA

'Occidit miseros crambe repetita magistros.'
JUVENAL'S *Satires*.

GREAT men are not infallibly right in their *obiter dicta*, and it is quite permissible to doubt whether Juvenal meant all he is supposed by most folks to have intended when he wrote the famous line that heads this chapter. It is usually held to mean that the eternal sameness of the teacher's life takes all the gusto from it and in the end brings the poor man to an early grave. Perhaps Juvenal thought so. If he did, he was a less wise man than he is usually held to have been. But it is worth noting how emphatic is the position Juvenal gives to the adjective 'miseros.' He was metrist enough to have arranged the words more closely in accordance with the conventional translation if he had meant simply to condemn the wearisome monotony of the Pedagogue's life. Perhaps he had no such intention. At any rate, what he has said might well be true enough even to-day if

we interpret it with due emphasis on the adjective. For none will deny that the 'poor,' *i.e.* the ineffective or 'feckless,' teacher has a wretched time of it, just because his teaching is so much of a monotonous grind. For there are those who teach by force of circumstances and with no goodwill to the task. Sometimes they express their misery in pathetic verse. Here is how a poet of to-day speaks :—

> 'I 'm here at Clifton, grinding at the mill
> My feet for thrice nine barren years have trod;
> But there are rocks and waves at Scarlett still,
> And gorse runs riot in Glen Chass—thank God!'

It is a pity we have not a Juvenal of to-day to show us the other side of the shield, to tell us how, for some teachers, there is no monotony in the work, but an abiding and enthralling charm, which, so far from hastening the advent of Death, actually prolongs and sweetens the closing years of Life.

An Inspector of Schools was on one occasion asked if he did not find it extremely monotonous to go round, day after day, putting the same sort of question to the same sort of child. 'By no means, Madam,' was the suave reply, 'for one encounters so many varieties of stupidity.'

Certain errors seem to establish themselves in

popular thought, and even to crystallise into current aphorism. We all know the 'patient' angler. Now it is simply not true that patience is one of the characteristics of the angler. Andrew Lang would have dealt faithfully with the originator of the phrase had it occurred to him to do so. For many anglers are extremely impatient. If they were patient they might catch more fish. What the real angler does have, and what stays him through the blank days and seasons, is not patience, but enthusiasm and hope. The genial satirist who defined an angler thus came nearer the truth. 'The angler is one who goeth out a long while before dawn full of hope, and returneth a long while after sunset full of whisky, and the truth is not in him.'

A similar error has too long prevailed as to the work of the teacher. His life is anything but monotonous if he be a real teacher and have the root of the matter in him. If he happen to be a round peg in a square hole, the sooner he slips out of it the better for all concerned. For not only will he be most unhappy himself, but he will make many others unhappy as well, and leave them ignorant to boot. Failing pitifully to earn his own bread, he is actually devitalising the bread of others. Milton's scathing lines on the neglectful

clergy ' whose hungry sheep look up and are not fed ' would be far too mild for such pseudo-teachers as actually feed their flock with fare that impoverishes where it ought to nourish.

The mention of nourishment suggests reference to a very widespread error. The word ' Education ' is, even by many who ought to know better, connected with the idea of ' drawing out,' as if it were derived from the root ' educere.' If it *had* come from that root its form would have been ' Eduction ' ; and it would have meant ' building up.' (Vergil uses the phrase ' educĕre turrim.') The old Latin sentence might have kept us from error, ' Educit obstetrix ; educat nutrix ; instituit paedagogus ; docet magister.' The root idea in the word is clearly that of nursing. But that is by the way.

To the teacher who follows his profession from love of it there need come no monotony. Each child is a fresh problem ; each lesson is a new opportunity ; each day may see a new experiment or a new discovery.

For far too long the profession of teaching was regarded as the last resource of those who had failed in all else. Few old folks in Scotland fail to remember a teacher who was either a cripple or a ' Stickit Minister.' The youth who had sown his wild oats too freely, and run through his

patrimony, turned to teaching as the sole possible avenue for his slender talents. No wonder we had our Eugene Arams! Nor was the refuge for men only. Women who could find nothing else to do became governesses of sorts or taught Dame Schools for a miserable pittance. It is extremely doubtful if they really earned so much as they received! Too many were like Nicholas Nickleby—willing but incompetent. Nicholas did not profess to be a teacher, and in his modesty lay his success. His treatment of Smike shows that he had the right stuff in him. Squeers, of course, was a sheer impostor, with, one must admit, some sound views on the question of Practical Instruction.

In nothing more than in variety of methods does the teaching of to-day differ from that of our forefathers. There are still those who hold that there is one best way in which to impart information of a particular sort. Such critics would gladly see a system of uniform school-books prevail; they would have every teacher adopt the same order in his presentation of the subject-matter of instruction; they would have every part of the school work performed with military precision. In short, they would retain much of the very 'crambe repetita' of which Juvenal com-

plains. Such critics forget the highly important fact that the teacher is greater than his theme. The personality of a good teacher cannot be hidden ; it must come out, no matter what the lesson be. Where personality is lacking, routine is bound to creep in, and lay its deadening hand on all that is done. It would be absurd to deny that in all teaching there must of necessity be repetition ; but repetition need not be either uninteresting or unintelligent, as it so often is. The same fact may be presented in several different forms, each possessing its peculiar interest, and one of the main charms in teaching is the effort required to find these forms. The precise fashion of presentation must depend on the individual child, and here lies the fundamental reason for small classes. Where classes are large, it is practically impossible to discover the bent of each child, and flavour his fare accordingly. To illustrate—A teacher desires to induce his pupils to make use of the school library. He can only succeed if he has some idea of the interests of each child. There is little use in suggesting to a boy whose main interest is in engines that he should read *The Jungle Book*, nor in giving Henty's stories to a boy whose interests are centred in animals. A boy may stumble over a rule in

arithmetic until he sees it applied in a fashion that he can understand, and to things in which he is interested. Half the failures in our schools are due to the fact that teachers either have not time to find out, or do not trouble to discover, the things that really interest their pupils. Nothing is so clear an indication of the failure on the part of teachers to grasp the fundamental facts of the situation as the extraordinary prevalence in some schools of what is euphemistically termed 'simultaneous work.' It takes many and weird forms. Now a band of youngsters proclaim to all and sundry who may be within earshot that 'Two and two make four,' or that 'c-a-t spells cat'; again the voices unite in informing all who are unfortunate enough to be in the neighbourhood that 'The boy stood ON the burning deck.' Now this is certainly simultaneous—more or less—but it is certainly not work. After the first few seconds the children cease to attend to what they are saying, and go on in a mechanical fashion, thinking, happily for them, of something else. The teacher probably thinks also of something else, and the chant goes on until some lucky interruption occurs. Another most debasing form of the disease is found in simultaneous reading, wherein the pupils *en masse* repeat after the teacher,

and with excellent imitation of all errors, a passage read. And many a good hour which might have been given to real reading has been thus wasted. But the evil is slowly dying, as books worth reading silently become more widely available for all children.

In the study of poetry some teachers find drudgery; they do not use their opportunity wisely, or they would tell another tale. Even the errors pupils make have their profound interest. And only through individual discussion do we find out what these errors are. A boy, reading Hogg's 'Kilmeny,' came to the line, 'Her neck was like the lily flower.' His teacher asked what he thought that meant; at once came the answer, 'It was yellow.' For the boy knew daffodils alone as 'lilies.' A class had read Wordsworth's 'Daffodils,' and the teacher asked the meaning of the passage

> 'I gazed and gazed, but little thought
> What wealth the show to me had brought.'

One practically-minded boy suggested that the poet got more money for the poem than he had been expecting! On another occasion the poem studied had been Milton's 'L'Allegro.' The class had followed the course of the lesson with keen

interest, and at the close the teacher drew their attention to the lines—

> 'Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
> By whisp'ring winds soon lulled asleep.'

'Why do you think Milton says that they "creep" to bed?' she asked. And one prosaic youth ventured the explanation 'Because they had had so much of the "nut-brown ale" that they could not walk!' One never knows when the most ordinary and hackneyed piece of work is going to yield something of great psychological interest. But the teacher must be always on the alert, or he will miss just those things that prevent the dreaded monotony.

In a sense, of course, there must be a sameness in all schools. The appurtenances of education change very slowly. The nurses in Ancient Greece sang songs to keep vampires from their charges; the Greek peasant of to-day still sings them. We know that a child in Ancient Greece used to ride on horseback on a stick; we know, too, that the maternal slipper was, in those days as in these, regarded at times with severe respect. Greek children had their 'rattles' as ours have; they had definite hours at school, and were bound to study certain subjects, such as Music and Gymnastics.

But the monotony does not lie in the nature of

the curriculum. There are as many ways of teaching a subject in school as, according to Kipling, there are of ' constructing tribal lays.' It cannot, perhaps, be said, as of the tribal lays, ' that every single one of them is right,' but far more are right than wrong. And the teacher in earnest nearly always finds one of the right ones. Nor need he have a highly varied course of instruction in order to avoid ennui ; many a good man finds happiness in teaching the same work, year by year, to a fresh class. For classes have a way of varying which adds much to the interest of the teacher's work. The presentation of a theme to one group of children will prove quite satisfactory, but it will fail with another group. This is frequently illustrated in such lessons as History. One class becomes quite enthusiastic over things which leave another quite cold. Group psychology is a fascinating study, and no one has so good an opportunity to prosecute it as the teacher. Recent years have seen great developments in the activities which are to be regarded as proper to a school, and the widening of the outlook has done much to abolish the danger of monotony. In the view of some critics, the programme of most schools is sadly overcrowded. Yet when it comes to be decided which subject ought to be dropped out,

supporters are ready to stand out for every one of the many branches of instruction. Progress may perhaps be made in the direction of allowing more freedom of choice than was at one time considered proper. Sometimes, at the stage succeeding the elementary school, pupils have this freedom, and they use it in odd ways. One bright girl turned up at an evening school to enroll. She was a young lady of fine aplomb, and to the teacher who asked what course she wished to pursue she laid down her demands. 'I want to learn three things, and I won't have any others on any account; I want to learn to dance, to write letters, and to cook.' She had her way, and doubtless has long ere this found the accomplishments to be of very sound practical value in life.

It might seem likely that the tendency towards specialisation in our schools would lead to monotony, but the capable specialist is, or ought to be, too wide in his views to feel cramped in his work. The true specialist never forgets that his own subject is only a part of life. He treats it in its application to other subjects and to life generally. One has at times been struck, in listening to a first-rate teacher in a university, by the extent to which his teaching was of general application in life. His subject might be Greek, or Mathe-

matics, or Philosophy, but it always touched Life. In short, what the students got that was of supreme value to them was not Greek, or Mathematics, or Philosophy, but the experience of seeing an intellect of the first quality at work on life and its interests. So it is in our schools ; the subject-matter of the instruction is really of minor importance ; the great thing is that they provide opportunity for our children to see what study can really mean. They are shown how almost any subject can, in the right hands, prove a tool of high value for the sharpening of human wits, and they have, in all sorts of subjects, opportunities for the exercise of the wits they themselves happen to possess.

Therein lies the reason why it is so difficult to select teachers ; Knowledge is not always allied to the power of awaking interest ; some of the most learned men prove miserable failures when they try to teach, and some men of much more slender academic attainments have in a high degree the power of inspiring their pupils. Time usually adjusts the balance so that a decent average results, but in the process the elimination of the unfit is necessarily attended with such pain as makes one at times agree with the popular interpretation of Juvenal after all.

CHAPTER IX

REALMS OF GOLD

'Much I have travelled in the realms of gold.'
KEATS.

IN the study of Poetry the school finds one of its supreme functions. In no other part of school work does the teacher find so great an opportunity of influencing the hearts of his pupils, which, after all, are infinitely more interesting, and immensely more important than their heads. It is not really a strange thing that the opportunity should lie where it does, for, when all is said, the true teacher cannot but be, consciously or not, in a very real sense a poet. He is a 'Makar,' a creator, though the medium in which he works is so delicate and so fine that he may be truly said, like the poet in Shakespeare's narrower sense,

'To give to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'

Is aught in the world more delicate than the soul of a little child? Yet, while we exercise consummate diligence in the training of the mind, and in the building up of the body, it is unfortu-

nately true that we are apt at times to neglect the vital matter of the training of the heart. Wordsworth realised its necessity when, in his lovely poem on 'The Education of Nature,' he spoke of 'Vital feelings of delight.' An older poet than Wordsworth has, with grave beauty, summarised the matter in saying, 'Out of the heart are the issues of life.'

It would be no very incomplete definition of the function of school to call it a place where children learn to do, to think, and to feel. It will be useful for all of us to omit for a little the physical and intellectual aspects of child life and think alone of the emotional. Let us conceive for an instant the variety of the emotions—joy, fear, wonder, grief, love, hate, horror, pity, awe—to take but a few at random. How completely the study of poetry serves to arouse in us, children of a larger growth, these feelings! Which of us but recalls the mingled wonder, fear, and awe with which he read 'The Ancient Mariner,' the pity he felt for Desdemona or Ophelia, the joy of life in Stevenson's 'Vagabond' or in the merry rogue Autolycus, the shuddering horror that grips the reader of 'Christabel,' or of 'Eugene Aram.' Cannot the poet play on our emotions as he will? Are we not sensitive to the pipes of Pan or the lute

of Orpheus if we but let them play for us ? There is, truly, much virtue in an 'if.' One cannot bow a violin with a broomstick. To bow a violin at all is, even to the skilful, no easy feat, but it is a thousand times easier than to play to children fairy music on the viewless pipes of Pan. And yet how many of us, with rude fingers, essay the harder task without feeling, or—Heaven forgive us !—suspecting its extreme delicacy. Well might angels fear to tread in the paths so lightly marked out by framers of regulations and devisers of schemes in education. Yet we were fools indeed not to step in and do each of us what he can. Emotions untrammelled and untrained run riot when the evil day comes, and it is our plain duty to give guidance so far as we may. It is a duty, but it is also a very high privilege and a very pure pleasure. Therein lies the reason why we 'teach' poetry in our schools at all.

Some emotions, however, have no place in child life. Fear, horror, and hate we must rigidly exclude. Joy, love, wonder, pity, awe we include in varying proportions and to varying degrees. The end in view is always the same, to wit, the creation of an emotion inseparable from a particular poem. We have three factors, viz. : Child, Poem, and Teacher, and the least of these is the teacher. Yet

the teacher does not go for nothing. With a particular child and a given poem one teacher will succeed and another will fail. Why? With different children the same teacher will sometimes succeed and sometimes fail. Why? With a class of children different teachers will succeed in degrees varying from near perfection to zero. Again, Why? One is reminded, if he try to answer these queries, of Stevenson's caustic line—

'It 's gey an' easy speirin', said the beggar wife to me.'

Where, with a particular poem, one teacher succeeds and another fails, the failure is almost certainly due to the fact that the teacher does not himself feel the emotion the poem is meant to arouse. Of course he ought not to have chosen it, or as is extremely likely, he ought not to be dealing with poetry at all. In his delightful book, *English for the English*, which every teacher ought to read and re-read, Mr. George Sampson deals very honestly and faithfully with such a teacher. Before any poem can really succeed, there must be sympathy between teacher and child. Otherwise irreparable harm will almost certainly be done.

In the second case, the same teacher, using the same poem, will sometimes succeed and sometimes fail. The question here is much more subtle.

Children vary much in emotional susceptibility, and the poem which appeals to one will leave another quite cold. *De gustibus non est disputandum.* The poem should be selected to suit the age of the child, and for young children, the emotion ought to be simple. Almost any child can admire Barbara Frietchie or sorrow over the mystery of Lucy Gray, but only the elect can see the wintry picture, and feel the throb of humanity in 'Ring out, wild bells!' Experiment and reflection alone will help in the selection.

No real poem can ever become hackneyed. You may bow a Stradivarius as execrably as may be; it is none the less a Stradivarius. The music of Pippa's song still rings true though one has heard it a thousand times in as many different keys. And the most captious critic must admit that there is no scarcity of suitable poetry for every stage in life. There is not, and there never will be, an entirely suitable anthology. The thing is impossible. There are, fortunately, many most valuable anthologies. But every real teacher must assist in the making of his own. The children are the only true anthologists. It is they who ought to make the final selection. And they do. For only the poems that have gone home and

been loved will remain. The others, be they never so carefully chosen, will vanish like dew under the morning sun. This much one might say to the anxious teacher: 'If you love the poem and feel its beauty, if you wish the children so to love it and so to feel its beauty, then go on in hope, and you will almost certainly succeed.'

Why do some teachers succeed so much better than others with the same poem and the same children? Simply because all teachers are not by nature equally good, nor equally fond of poetry. Some people do not care in the least for poetry; such folks, should they happen to be teachers, ought to leave poetry severely alone. This may seem to be a counsel of perfection, but it is sound. It may be asked, however, if there are enough lovers of poetry to go round. Perhaps not, but even then the case is not entirely desperate. If poetry fails, we may fall back on vivid narrative in verse. He would be indeed a bad teacher who would do any harm with Macaulay's 'Horatius' or Longfellow's 'Paul Revere's Ride.' The only pity would be that finer work was, in the circumstances, impossible.

One question remains: Why does a teacher succeed with one poem and fail with another? As a rule, perhaps, because complete understand-

ing has not been established between teacher and class. One can almost always tell whether an intimate friend will like or dislike a book or a poem. One man says to me, 'You should read So-and-So's book,' and I go and buy it, for I realise that my friend knows me. Another man says, 'You ought to read that fine book by Such-a-man,' and I decide not to read it, for I know him. The thoughtful teacher who knows his children rarely fails in his selection. But the burden of choice ought not to lie with the teacher alone; it ought to be understood that pupils are to make their own selection as well. They are not seldom the better critics in the absolute sense, and of course they must be better judges of what pleases themselves. Time and thought must be given to the task of selection, for there are few more real joys than to see dawning appreciation of beauty. Think of the charm that story-telling holds for children, and then conceive the added charm if the moving tale be couched in simple and beautiful words wedded to rhythmic beauty of form. Only supreme care in selection brings consummate joy. It is almost as delicate a business to choose a poem as to choose a wife, and yet the guiding stars in the adventurous quest are few and clear—Love, Trust, and Ardour.

All children love rhythm—even before they can speak, and as poetry must give delight, at the early stages rhythm counts for almost everything, meaning for comparatively little. The tiny child has a heart, doubtless, but it is uncommonly near his limbs from one point of view and his ' tummy ' from another. Physical movement is almost essential to baby-rhymes Fancy ' Ride a cock horse ' bereft of its physical accompaniment ! Whatever real meaning nursery rhymes may possess, it is clear that the pleasure of good things to eat is real enough. Think of Miss Muffet's curds and whey, or of the blackbirds in the pie, or even of Tom Tucker's brown bread and butter, or of

> ' The friendly cow, all red and white,
> I love with all my heart.
> She gives us milk with all her might
> To eat with apple tart.'

There is no safer guide than that immortal boy, R. L. Stevenson. Children should, at this stage, hear much poetry. They will remember as much as is good for them. As intelligence develops, and the child learns to read for himself, he begins to love a story, and can rejoice or sorrow at a simple happening. Just here the teacher encounters a manifest danger : a good story may be

told in very bad verse. Many a so-called poem in school anthologies and readers has no claim to the name. The metre and language may be thoroughly bad, yet the story may at the same time be eminently good. And children are very tolerant—to their sorrow and loss. It would be interesting, useful, and—sad to say—easy to compile an anthology of Bad Verse for Boys and Girls.

At this stage the emotions of wonder and pity are probably most open to appeal. Fancy must and does play a very large part in a child's happiness. The world of make-believe is still beautifully real, and it is our duty to see that it does not too soon vanish in the heat and bustle of intellectual achievement.

With increasing knowledge a child's sympathy naturally widens. He learns to admire bravery and to appreciate wit. In the higher classes, then, there is room for the poetry of achievement and action. We have a great history, and much of it is immortalised in our poetry. From the Arthurian legend, through the Ballad and Shakespeare, down to 'Drake's Drum' and the *Poems of To-day*, we have an inspiring heritage of historical poetry. To allow a child to leave school without having heard at least some of the great

expressions of love of country that lie between Barbour's

'Ah! Freedom is a noble thing,'

and Swinburne's Epilogue in 'The Armada' is little short of a crime.

Poems of reflection do not, as a rule, appeal strongly to children. They prefer poems wherein, to use their own slang, 'there is something doing.' Thus, one could be more sure of the appeal of Tennyson's 'Revenge' than of Wordsworth's 'Daffodils.' Bairns will be bairns, the saying goes, and we ought to keep them bairns as long as is humanly possible. Poetry ought never to be a task. When it is, there is something wrong, and radically wrong. Great care should be taken to make the first hearing of a poem as accurate, attractive, and effective as possible. If due care is taken to see that the poem is thoroughly understood, and that the children like it, the mere memorisation is not really a hard matter. Good poetry memorises itself if it has a chance. But it is highly dangerous for children to try to repeat lines before they really know them. Errors tend to persist, and prevention is better than cure.

The reader may have observed that no mention has been made of Elocution or Recitation. If

we take care of the Poetry, the reproduction will look after itself. Too often the mode of reproduction is regarded as the chief thing. It is not. The feeling and enjoyment of the poem are the vital concerns, and the most brilliant elocutionary rendering parroted in approved style may be the result of hopelessly bad teaching. In fact, very often the less teaching the better. To enjoy a poem, children must understand it so far as they may. Great poems are inexhaustible; we rise, with passing years, to wider vistas of understanding.

At first the poems read should as a rule be fairly short, but a child of twelve may study a poem so long as 'The Ancient Mariner' or 'Enoch Arden' with delight. Children are good critics, and may be trusted to choose for memorisation passages that are really worth it. And it may well be worth while to let them know why they are asked to memorise passages. That is to say, if we, who bid them do it, know ourselves! If we do not, it is high time we did. We must be honest with our children and with ourselves. What is poetry to us? Do we ever learn a poem off by heart? If so, why? There are at least two honest answers. One is that we do it, because we cannot help ourselves; the poetry captures us, and is therefore

unforgettable. If one tests children without warning on the poems in their reading-books, one finds that they very often can repeat the best of them perfectly, even though they have not been called upon to memorise them. Great truly is the power of rhythm.

But that is only one of the answers: the other is harder to come by. Is it not that we desire to give our children some things of beauty that may be to them joys for ever? Here is a true story. Some very, very poor children from the slums of Edinburgh were taken for their first visit to the country—to a quiet riverside in the month of June. One mite stood speechless for a long time, but finally found words, and, with a long-drawn breath, turned to her teacher: 'O! Miss B——, the quiet waters by!' It was all she could utter, but how perfectly she said it, thanks to King David and to some old Scots Metrist.

Children have queer notions of why they learn poetry. Some believe it is good to show off at a party, others think it may help them to spell, others again fancy they thus learn new words. And they are none of them quite wrong. But until they make friends of the poems, and come to love them, they cannot even faintly realise what poetry may mean. Towards that desirable end

it is our delightful duty to guide them as best we can. A well-known writer on psychology makes this fine general statement: 'If the teacher have never cultivated his own faculty of appreciation, he will be little able to render efficient service to his pupils in this respect.' Children are not naturally observant of beauty, but if the attention is drawn to beautiful things, the habit of observation comes. When a child spontaneously says, 'O mother! look at that lovely cloud,' the mother is being rewarded for her teaching in appreciation.

A writer has said, 'Reading prose is like playing with muted strings; in poetry alone do we hear the full orchestral tone of our language.' To read poetry as it should be read is given only to the very, very few. Sometimes a poet reads his own poetry in such a way that it is far from pleasing to his hearers. In fact, the whole question, like all other questions of taste, is a vexed one, and incapable of final solution. But at least we ought to see that our children can read poetry in such a way as to enjoy the reading themselves. For if they do not, the Realms of Gold are not for them.

CHAPTER X

WINDOWS OF HEAVEN

'One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee,
One lesson that in every wind is blown,
One lesson of two duties kept at one,
Though the loud world proclaim their enmity.
Of toil unsevered from tranquillity,
Of labour that in still advance outgrows
Far noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

OF all teachers, the greatest is Nature. The world is her school, and her scholars are numbered by the million. Education with her is not compulsory, though it is free. She abides by no Regulations; nor has she either school-hours or definite curricula. Now and then she gives a class lesson, in tones that reverberate through entire regions, or illuminates her discourse with flashes of forked lightning. At times she loses patience with her indifferent or refractory pupils, and administers rebuke by flood or fire. But as a rule her teaching is individual, and of the most persuasive and appealing sort. Diligence she ever rewards, and interest, once aroused, she ever

stimulates and increases Her staff is numerically beyond all computation, and they have neither fixed hours of work nor any vacation. Her themes are of infinite variety, admirably adapted to the environment, the needs, and the natural gifts of the pupils. The sweep of her survey is so wide that a willing scholar is led to higher things and finer thoughts through every avenue of his intelligence. Sometimes the lesson is for the eye—and Nature is the supreme painter; again it is for the ear—and what can excel her music? anon she gives physical instruction, and teaches her children the grace of motion or the beauty of delicate poise; then in a witching mood she plays the sphinx, setting a task for the brain and offering a seemly reward for those who shall solve her riddles. And always, be the lesson what it may, she touches the heart, clearing and refining the emotions, ennobling and beautifying the soul.

None need attend her school who have not the will to work; if they choose to be absentees or truants, the loss is theirs. Nature employs no compulsory officers to hunt out defaulters or drag in the reluctant.

Voluntary helpers she does not disdain, but rather encourages, and among them all should be proud to enroll, but most of all those whose lot

is cast in the places where Man and Nature are least at one—in crowded cities. In the country Nature takes the children to herself :—

> 'This child, I to myself will take;
> She shall be mine, and I will make
> A lady of my own.'

In the cities, from which Nature is too often so rudely driven, we must try to be her humble deputies. Our hands must bring to the little ones the offerings Nature lavishes so freely on their more fortunate brothers and sisters elsewhere.

When we, as a nation, learn even a little wisdom, our city schools shall be veritable oases in the dreary desert of human tenements. They shall have the first claim on open spaces, though economic theories of Land Values be blown sky high. Trees and verdure shall girdle them about, and enfold them in a cloistered peace. Our windows shall indeed be 'magic casements,' opening on fair gardens and wide skies. And our children shall learn as much out-of-doors as in, and learn more easily and more happily.

It is a curious fact that open-air schools are to-day peopled almost entirely by cripple or invalid children. Some of the schools, contrasted with those for normal children, would almost

induce malingering! No one grudges those fair places to the weaker ones, but in such quarters the strong would grow even stronger.

For centuries it has been our way to exclude Nature from much of human activity. Apparently our forefathers held that Nature would lure us from Learning. It was the hard church-pew over again. Just as comfort was rigorously excluded from the auditorium in church and college, so the open companionship of Nature was regarded as a snare of the Evil One. Probably that is why stained windows are the rule in churches, and the windows of schools are either opaque or are set too high to look out of. Oddly enough, it is only in rare country churches—old ones always—that the worshipper is permitted to feel the fellowship of Nature.

Windows are supposed to fulfil a double function; they let in the light, and they permit a view. But for long enough it has been the stupid rule in schools that windows are not meant to look out of. One has to admit that at times it really does not matter—the outward view is so unattractive that the window is almost better opaque. Still, there is always at least a patch of open sky, and Nature wastes no corners of any of her canvases. The very tiniest bit of sky has its possibilities.

A small boy of three, who had lived all his short life in a fair country home, was taken to dwell in a city, where his parents found it impossible to secure what the child called 'a garden house.' When settled in his city home he used, with pathetic regularity, to carry home from his daily walks in the suburbs a leaf or a twig. So slight a token served apparently to keep him in touch with the Nature he had learned to love.

Children have queer notions about the unknown. A little boy who lived in a mining district was about to pay his first visit to the sea, and an interested friend pressed him to say what he thought the sea would be like. 'As big as the biggest lum in the Works' was his reply. Immensity for him was evidently measured in terms of chimney-stacks! Another child made his first sea trip from Leith to Aberdour: he told his parents on his return that he had sailed 'from the one end of the sea to the other.'

City children seldom have good power of distant vision. And little wonder, when their most distant horizon is the prospect of the other side of the street, or at best the other side of a city square. Yet for these children our schools do wonders in the way of opening the windows of Heaven. From their homes in the suburbs

teachers bring leaves and flowers which the children observe and draw and paint. The result leaves curious blanks in knowledge. Any child in a 'slum' school will recognise and name most of the common spring flowers, but not the summer ones. Snowdrops and daffodils he knows, but not roses and poppies. For these come when school is out of session, and he has no kind teacher to bring them that he may see. But Nature is not easily baulked of her own; a teacher was once astonished when a city urchin brought as a gift a fine bunch of bright blossoms. He said 'Thank you,' and asked whether the boy had been to the country. 'No, Sir,' was the answer, 'but we had a walk in the Cemetery on Sunday!'

A girl from an industrial centre went to be a domestic servant in a country schoolhouse. Her mistress sent her into the garden to pluck some gooseberries for a tart. She was absent longer than seemed necessary, and her mistress, becoming impatient, went in search of her. She found her vainly searching for gooseberries—on the apple-trees!

We cannot bring Nature to all of our children, and we sometimes try to take the children away from the city slums to Nature. The experiment often appears to be a failure—and we can scarcely

wonder. For we are apt to expect too much. Nature is a strange world to the city child, and fear of the unknown is a stern master. Take a band of city youngsters off to the real country, and what do they do? Probably play football, and act on the whole as if they were at home. For thus they feel safe in a strange environment. What would we have them do? Nature acts slowly. A day in the country has no appreciable effect on a child's nature; he must live a while with Nature before she can even begin her benign work.

The comparatively modern institution of Holidays is Nature's way of preserving the mental balance of mankind. Man feels that he must keep in touch with Nature if he would preserve his sanity, and so he makes his annual pilgrimage to the sea or to the hills. So our children—even, perhaps especially, city children—must have some time in the year in which they may meet with the elements out of doors—may enjoy the sunshine or fight the wind, or face the freshness of a summer shower. During a few weeks in the year all our children come into direct contact with Nature. Nothing is more delightful than to see thousands of these children making for the suburbs on the first Holiday of Spring. Even in their blood is the call of the Wild, and off they set, laden with

victuals and liquid nourishment, for some open common or some suburban hill-top, where they may revel for a little in the unusual sense of freedom and space. In the evening they return tired, dishevelled, and often a little cross, but Nature has had her day. And so long as parents, who feel at all times the nearness of the wolf, find it in their hearts and pockets to finance such outings, one may feel assured that there is some good left in the world after all.

What a pity it is that some wiseacre invented the ugly word Nature-Study, and the equally objectionable 'Nature Knowledge'! Even Nature-lesson is bad enough, because, like its more pretentious equivalents, it inevitably suggests to a child—Books. Now books have their place even here, but not at first. One loves to read a Guide-book after having seen the country with which it deals, and those who know Nature like to hear each other speak of her, even in books. But for little children—No! Let them have things—flowers and beasts and birds, rain and sun, mud-puddles and sand-heaps. Let us keep the books till they ask for them, which they will do in their own good time. And, thanks to Kipling and Kenneth Grahame and William J. Long and scores of others, we have good books to give them.

What a great deal of ordinary school work can be done, and well done, out of doors! In some fortunate spots, schools are carried on all summer *en plein air*. The writer remembers one at Gatehouse of Fleet, which met in the open air for an entire summer. School appurtenances were carried out by willing hands and the school day went on as usual, unless when a summer shower drove teachers and pupils to shelter under a convenient and umbrageous plane-tree. The experiment was a complete success, and the bill of health for teachers and scholars was never better. Besides, certain subjects in the curriculum really *ought* to be discussed in the open air—Geography for one, Drawing for another, and possibly Music for a third.

Recent years have seen the institution of the school camp and the school journey, both admirable avenues of approach to Nature. When Duke Senior, in *As You Like It*, says—

> 'Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> Here feel we but the seasons' difference,'

he is looking back, as the phrase 'old custom' shows us, to the primordial instinct for the open

air. Had he lived to-day he would surely have been a Scoutmaster.

No movement, not purely educational—and very few others—have so deeply affected school life as the Boy-Scout Movement. Teachers are finding out with pleasure that for enterprises demanding skill and resource, not to speak of hardihood and nerve, they can usually depend on the Scout and the Guide, whose hobby involves much open-air life.

Aristotle and Plato both lay it down as essential that Youth must learn from as early an age as possible to rejoice in, and to be grieved by, the right things. And surely in our dealings with Nature we have the finest opportunity of leading our little ones to see and to love Beauty in all forms, and to feel the tenderness that is inseparable from much of Nature's teaching. All great poets are Nature-lovers, and every true lover of Nature must needs have poetry in his soul, even if it fail to reach the lips. How much more one finds in Shakespeare when he knows the charms of the English countryside, or in Shelley or Wordsworth when Nature has made him her own? An eminent geographer recently lectured on 'Wordsworth as a Scientist,' and showed that some of his poems are excellent pieces of accurate

scientific description. And we all know how the poets at times astonish us by their accurate observation of Nature Tennyson's love of accurate detail is well known, and in Keats we meet wonderful lines :—

'Touch the stubble fields with *rosy* hue.'

or

'Glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on a wealth of globed paeonies,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand wave.'

How much of what is finest in poetry we miss if we cannot open the windows of our souls to Heaven! And how much our children miss if during their long school life they have no hours of quiet companionship with Nature! Nature is never vulgar, and to call a man 'one of Nature's gentlemen' is the highest compliment we can well bestow. We cannot do too much to encourage Youth to give willing attendance in Nature's great school, if we would have it graduate with honours in God's own university.

CHAPTER XI

ORPHEUS WITH HIS LUTE

The whole life of man requireth true rhythm and just harmony.—PLATO'S *Protagoras*.

NOTHING more surely indicates the trend of human opinion than the vicissitudes in human speech. He who would offer in a word a contrast between the culture of ancient Hellas and that of to-day might fitly select for his text the single word 'Music.'

This is no place for a dissertation on the precise connotation of the term *μουσικη*. Suffice it to say that whereas in ancient Greece Music comprehended all of human or divine that could be said, sung, or conceived, with us to-day the term too often connotes but a tiny and relatively insignificant corner of human experience. And this is wrong; sometimes it is cruelly wrong. For Music is one of the vital issues. It is with us at all the great moments—of joy or sorrow, of triumph or tribulation. Nature is full of it, and childhood loves it. Yet it seldom plays its due

part in the lives of our children, and we, their elders, are much to blame. Not at the very first, perhaps, for the clouds of glory trail to the tones of heavenly symphonies, and human hearts in close touch are attuned to catch the music. It seems unthinkable that any tiny child can pass a songless infancy, but it may be so. Even if cradles are something out of fashion, we still have our cradle-songs. It is beyond the power of even Harley Street to still the mother's croon, or banish the kindly rhythm that abides in the arms of a true nurse.

To a child, song is more natural than speech. Pope was no prodigy that he 'lisped in numbers.' All children have music in their hearts and in their limbs, even though it may prove faint, or even lacking, in their voices. The young child at play is never at a loss for music; he makes it as he goes. Peradventure it may seem crude to our ears, but the fault is in us; it serves. Modern composers are harking back at times to the music of a younger—almost a barbarous—world; in other words musicians are learning to understand the real bond that links Music with Youth.

It is perhaps regarded as odd that Plato banishes much music from the schools in his Utopia, in view of the opinion quoted at the head of this

chapter, but old Roger Ascham agreed with him, and argued that music is too much a matter of minute and trifling detail, wherein a boy may lose much precious time. It is probably true that even to-day music has far too low a place in the scale of pedagogic values. True, it enters very largely into the curriculum of all good Infant schools, but as the shades of the prison-house gather the music dies, and with it disappears a potential for happiness whose value is beyond calculation. Out of school it so far holds its own ; the errand-boy still goes whistling and the country lass sings at her task, but we have something to answer for in the quality of the music they cultivate. Of genuine folk-song we can never have too much ; it is the heart of the whole matter. Our children preserve with scrupulous care the established music of their games. Scottish children sing ' Water, Water, Well-flower ' and ' Here 's a poor widow ' precisely as their grandfathers and grandmothers did, with no change of either words or music. Variations we certainly find, due to local versions, but in one place, one version persists.

The song-tide of the later years has, thanks to the Industrial Revolution, long been ebbing. But for the devoted labours of Mrs. Kennedy Fraser

and her kind, we should long ago have lost much of the most characteristic and vivid music of our land. Machinery has doubtless its own songs, and 'M'Andrew's Hymn' is a wonderful *tour de force*, but such things are for the adept rather than the ordinary mortal. It is a saddening thing to read the old Flodden lament,

> 'I 've heard the lilting at our yowe-milking,
> Lasses a-lilting before the dawn o' day';

and suddenly recall the fact that in dozens of farms cows are to-day milked by machinery. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

With the advance of Science have come new and uncouth forms of child-music. The pipes of Pan and the 'wreathed horn' of Triton have but faint affinity with the hooter and the jazz-band. One looks back with regret to the days when music was less of a mechanical performance than modern science has made it. There are those who hold that Music was dealt its hardest blow by the invention and popularisation of the pianoforte. Such an instrument makes it very easy for any one, however lacking in real musical spirit, to produce something which is at least tolerable, which would have been quite impossible with any instrument of the violin family. And so it has

become the custom to confine instrumental music in schools mainly to pianoforte performances, to the almost total neglect of wind and string instruments. And this is contrary to nature, whose percussion instruments are few in comparison with her wood-winds and strings.

Verily if there is a Cinderella in our ordinary schools to-day it is Music. Often enough there is none at all, except for the babies ; as a rule it is crushed into an odd corner of the time-table, to be omitted on the very slightest pretext. And, speaking generally, it seems possible, if not highly probable, that as a rule the main point is missed, inasmuch as we imagine that the end and aim of a music lesson is to *produce* music, whereas it should be to learn to enjoy and understand it. For one who makes music, there are hundreds whose part it is to listen and enjoy. That is the pity ; there should be thousands.

Now it is quite certain that most of us have to acquire the taste for certain types of music, as for certain types of food. And of music perhaps more than of any other art can we say that much is 'caviare to the general.' Yet it need not, by any natural law, be so. We do not actually require to teach a child to prefer Mendelssohn's 'Spring Song' to 'My Coal Black Mammy.' We have

only to see to it, so far as we can, that the real music has its fair chance along with the false. And happily it *is* having its chance. A little book was recently published, containing a most interesting account of an attempt carried out by Mr. C. T. Smith, to give real music a chance among the children of one of the poorest quarters of London. These children learned to sing and act real operas; they listened to good music, both at first hand and through the medium of a good gramophone. At intervals they provided a gramophone concert of their own, and as time passed it was found that the pupils almost ceased to bring from their homes records of a trashy nature, but brought things of real value. The lesson had gone right home, and penetrated into the family circles whence the records were borrowed. A Glasgow evening paper recently commented on the fact that an errand-boy was heard to whistle a passage from one of Schubert's symphonies. When interrogated by a pleased passer-by, he said he didn't know what tune it was, but he had got it at the 'Pictures.' All honour to those picture-houses where the orchestra is trying to raise the common standard of musical taste!

Happy the school that possesses a musician, and can make full use of him. If only there were

enough to go round! School music has of late made tremendous strides in certain favoured places. The conductor of the famous Orpheus Choir holds that the school choirs in Scotland are among the best in the world. Musical Festivals are reviving the spirit of emulation, and, what is far better, providing for teachers and pupils alike an excellent opportunity of hearing good music well rendered. It is pleasant to find the Carnegie Trust taking part in this effort by assisting to print new music, and by providing itinerant concert parties for rural areas. These parties tour remote regions and let folks who seldom have the chance hear really good music.

Every schoolboy knows what Shakespeare says about the man

> 'who hath no music in his soul,
> Nor is not moved by concord of sweet sounds,'

but too few teachers realise how deeply music may affect the whole tone of a school. Two capable and broad-minded teachers had to tackle, each in his own school, the highly uncongenial and difficult task of reforming the tone, which had been ruined by the harsh discipline of a predecessor. They succeeded to admiration, and were asked how the thing was done. One said, 'Oh, it was

easy enough; I got them all to begin to play the violin.' The other said, 'No trouble in the world; I taught the lot to dance national and folk dances, and that did the trick.'

One often hears it said that school life is too much divorced from ordinary life, and as a rule the critic has in mind the idea that children in school are not concerned all the time with those things which will one day help them to earn a living. Less frequently is complaint made that those things are neglected which will one day help the child to enjoy his life, and make good use of those hours of leisure that modern civilisation wisely ensures for all who toil. And to many a child music will ultimately mean far more than many a subject that ranks higher in the pedagogic scale of values. It is a pathetic reflection that the destitute find in music their last resource. When their world has gone wholly awry, and all other means of livelihood have failed, music still affords to the frailest and feeblest the final opportunity of earning a stray copper or two. The ultimate appeal to humanity is often that of the thin, quavering old voice, feebly piping again the songs of childhood in a brave effort to offer at least a semblance of return for charity received.

Plato's objection to certain types of music lies

in his fear that they may induce effeminacy. He would not have Youth 'Lapp'd in soft Lydian airs,' though he believes in the stimulus of martial measures, and he argues strongly and convincingly for the value of music as not merely a pleasant and useful stimulus, but a potent means of directing towards good the soul of man.

From the modern point of view there is a very strong argument for music in the large place it may hold in the due employment of leisure hours. All readily admit that if a youth leaves school with a love of reading he is thereby saved from many dangers and temptations; the same may be said of the youth who has learned to love good music. Browning's 'Pied Piper' is more than a mere tale; it is a parable. The lure of music is as powerful to-day as it was when the Sirens sang to Odysseus the song whose nature old Sir Thomas Browne tells us was 'though puzzling, not beyond all conjecture.' Every nation has its myths based on the appeal of music. True, the Sirens would have lured Odysseus to his doom, and the Lorelei the fisherman to destruction; the water-sprite of Scott's 'Rosabelle' shrieked with fiendish delight at the prospect of wreck; but on the other hand one must remember Orpheus, and Arion, and Bonnie Kilmeny, whose song

lulled to sleep the age-long animosities of the beasts.

In a book recently published, *Expression in Speech and Writing*, Mr. Greening Lamborn describes some highly interesting experiments in musical composition. He points out very clearly how children can, without any teaching, invent tunes to suit particular words, and even suggest words which interpret the spirit of tunes. He quotes the case of a boy who suggested, as appropriate words for the opening line of the Dead March in *Saul*, 'Down, down, down, to the depths of the sea.' Now work of this kind need not even be very successful in the ordinary sense to have a high value. Its value lies in its inherent interest. If we can make a youth really interested in any worthy subject, we give him a chance. Reading is one of the most obvious lines of approach, but Music is not far behind it. And it is on the whole perhaps less difficult to satisfy an interest in Music than one in Literature. It may often be done at less cost; many a man can secure happiness in his leisure by devoting it to the practice of one instrument, and great music is perhaps less expensive in the long run than great literature.

No one who is a regular listener to orchestral

music can have failed to observe how ignorant many folks are even of the most ordinary musical instruments. They could not tell a bassoon from a piccolo, nor a trombone from a trumpet. Yet few lessons in school could surpass in interest one on the different types of instrument, and how each acts. One day might be given to wind, another to strings, a third to percussion. Thereafter a lesson could be devoted to a family group, such as the violin family, or the reed family. The pupils would incidentally meet with some fundamental ideas in Science and even in Mathematics. Of course they would wish to try for themselves how the music was made, and results of incalculable value might follow. At least the chance would have been given. Nor need the romantic and poetic side of the subject be lost sight of; the alliance between Music and Poetry is one of the most resonant chords in life's orchestra.

It is sometimes said that country music is dead or dying; if it is true it is indeed a pity. But there is still some hope for it. We may never see again the country musicians such as Thomas Hardy loves to paint, but one finds string quartettes in the most unlikely places, and in most country schools one or two of the older lads can perform on the violin. It is said to be extremely difficult

to find one who plays the clarionet except in populous centres, but our schools have often enough a drum and fife band.

And we always have the human voice, a musical instrument of no mean quality, if often ill-treated and ill-trained. Of the voice in speech something falls to be said elsewhere; suffice it to remark here that when children have learned to use their voices in sweet song, there is little fear of their being misused in speech.

And what is sweeter than the voices of tiny children? The real teacher of little ones, who understands and loves them, has no trouble in training their voices to be sweet and soft; they naturally follow the model she sets. It is when our children go out into the world, and hear the raucous voices of the many-tongued multitude around them, that they run the risk of losing one of their most potent charms. The writer remembers perfectly that in his school-days the boys had the conviction that the one desirable thing in singing was loudness. Volume was what was wanted by our teacher, and he certainly used to get his desire. Every lesson was a veritable contest in power; we bellowed like the famous bulls of Bashan, and our master smiled a pleased acceptance of our tribute.

These days have gone, and these ways with them. The schoolboy of to-day may not sing so much as he ought, but he is not, as a rule, encouraged to bellow. Just as in providing material for reading the publishers long failed to give our children matter of literary merit, so with our school songs for long enough. Anything that had notes seemed to pass muster. In this, happily, there is now a great improvement, and one finds numerous school song-books which contain nothing that is not really good.

All children appear to love the singing-lesson, whether they can sing or not. In fact, as most teachers will admit, those who are least able to sing are very often the most willing. Perhaps the music is all right inside their brains though it may be far from pleasant to our listening ears. Let us hope so, at least.

CHAPTER XII

LITTERA SCRIPTA

EXPRESSION of thought is not confined to speech alone, and in all schools a very considerable part of the day is regularly spent in giving instruction in those arts by which we are in the habit of expressing our thoughts to those to whom, for one reason or another, it is impossible at the moment to speak. The two methods of expression with which it is possible to deal in school are Writing and Drawing. Of these Writing is, of course, the more important for all ordinary purposes, and it receives in all cases the more serious treatment. It is really far less important than speech, but it often receives more attention, because our use of it in examinations gives it a meretricious value. Some teachers seem to expect that children ought to progress in the art of writing *pari passu* with their advance in the art of speech. Which is surely absurd; for all children have been speaking for several years before they begin to write. Again, writing is full of all sorts of

artificial difficulties that do not hamper speech. True, these conventional peculiarities in writing are supposed to represent certain equivalents in speech, but in reality they do not; they are for the most part variable, arbitrary, and in no way allied to speech. A semi-colon has one meaning in English, another in Greek. To write the day of the week with a capital letter is essential in English, but wrong in French. And so on. In fact, in the early stages, the teaching of the writing of English is pretty much the establishment in the pupil's mind of a definite set of conventions linking speech with writing.

Behind all writing lies thought, and no power on earth can cause an ignorant or dull child to write anything clever or bright. Personality must be expressed, and all the teacher does to stimulate intelligence is of necessity reflected in the manner in which the child writes. We cannot cure a child of the habit of writing stupid or dull stuff without curing him of the stupidity or dullness, and to treat the symptoms without trying to remedy the disease is at best the most patent quackery. The writing of English is to the best and cleverest no easy matter, and for many of our children it is indeed a very hard task.

Naturally, writing at all stages must reflect

faults of speech, and the more a child acquires the habit of correct speech, the less will his writing prove a hard task. Those unfortunate ones who seldom, if ever, hear good English out of school need much help and much sympathy in their efforts to write English in school. That this is so has been recognised very fully of late by educational writers, who have given us scores of books which are meant to assist the teacher and the pupil in the enterprise. There is no doubt that the children of the elementary school of to-day have a far more satisfactory grasp of the principles of writing than similar children had forty years ago. For the methods by which they are taught are very much in advance of those of earlier years. I fancy it is true of most of us of the older generation that we were really taught to write Latin and Greek, but English was supposed to come by nature, like Latin quantities. We might write an occasional essay, but we were more thoroughly trained in the writing of Latin and Greek prose than in the writing of decent English prose. We did not try to write Latin prose until we had been well drilled in all the niceties that go to its formation, but in English we were permitted, nay, compelled to attempt the writing of passages while we were still quite

ignorant of the things which are essential in the formation of even a good English sentence. For it was the tradition of our schools that we should produce, from time to time, a theme, more or less exhaustive, on a subject in which our interest might be of the faintest. Our teachers were as much concerned with what we had to say as with the manner in which we said it. Now this was not quite fair to us. For the same thing may be said in ever so many ways, and it is only by making experiments in these ways that we learn to distinguish how one mode of expression is better than another. The children of to-day are encouraged to try experiments of this sort, and it adds not only to their knowledge and to their dawning sense of taste, but to their enjoyment.

Fluency is a good quality, but it ought to mark speech rather than writing in the earlier stages. It is a more useful exercise for a child to write the same fact in half a dozen different ways and then choose the best, than for him to write a dozen weak sentences in sequence. Speed and fluency will come in time. 'Well' rather than 'Much' or 'Rapidly' should be the aim at first.

As a rule the exercises set to our children are too long. When a child is able to write words with some facility an exercise which requires him to

write a complete sentence—not necessarily a simple sentence, for children speak in complex sentences—is quite sufficient at a time. It is by no means an easy matter to write a good sentence, and the exercise will require long practice. Then he may pass on to a paragraph of eight or ten lines, and thence to an occasional—very occasional—essay on an interesting theme.

But it must not be forgotten that after all writing will be of infinitely less practical value than speech to nine-tenths of our young folks. And most of their writing will be in the form of the letter, which receives scant enough consideration in most of our schools. For letter-writing is, sad to say, an art that is decaying. How few of our correspondents write letters that have either style or charm! And what a monstrosity the orthodox 'Business Letter' is! Yet there is much delight to be had from the teaching of the writing of even letters. The fundamental virtues of writing are exemplified to the full in the writing of a good, clear, and interesting letter. Children love to write a thing so completely personal as a letter, though they are less happy in the composition of a narrative or a statement of known facts.

When all is said, it must be admitted that it is as impossible to make a boy or girl a writer

as it would be to make him or her a poet. Yet there is room for much interesting effort in the attempt to secure that the ordinary rules of writing are moderately well observed. Genius will out, and every teacher of experience has met with the boy who writes with distinction by sheer strength of personality. But there is an enormous majority to whom writing is and probably always will be a matter requiring more effort than any other subject of school life. Many a working man would rather spend five shillings on a railway fare than write a letter; not a few folks still cherish a respect for a written message that they would not show for one given *viva voce*. It is all a matter of familiarity and practice. Writing enters really very little into some lives. Many an uneducated lad who goes off to make his fortune in the world is lost to his relatives from his reluctance to attempt the serious task of writing a letter. There is a Law in Psychology which tells us that the powers we gain last we lose first; the schoolboy who fails to keep in practice after he leaves school the lately acquired art of writing will in all probability ere long lose it altogether. And life will be the narrower for him and his thereby. So it behoves all of us who would do our best for Youth to do what we can here. Few things

give us more pleasure as we grow old than to be remembered by Youth. Many a man cherishes as things of rare value the letters he has at odd times received from those whom he has helped onward a little in the way of life.

Nothing is more useful, from this point of view, than what are familiarly known as ' F.P. Clubs.' These institutions exist to preserve, for those who have gone out into life, touch with the school that helped to equip them; while for those still in school they provide a contact with actual life which gives to the final years of school a reality they might not otherwise possess. Letters from ' Old Boys ' are always of special interest to those who are so soon to follow them out into the playing-fields of Life. Nor are such Clubs confined to the schools of the well-to-do; they flourish and bring forth fine fruit in what to many would seem sterile enough soil. Now and then teachers and former pupils arrange to meet in pleasant places. One Club, for instance, has rented a small cottage in the country, where groups spend occasional summer week-ends, and exchange news better than is possible by correspondence.

The importance of being able to write a letter without effort can scarcely be overestimated in the scale of educational values. The War helped

to show us how feeble a link is letter-writing to thousands of our young men who desire to keep in touch with the old home or the old school; business men of sense and standing are emphatic in the expression of the view that the ability to write a plain straightforward letter is by no means so widespread as it ought to be. Every teacher in a 'slum' school knows what astonishing things letters from parents occasionally are. And every such letter is in a sense a reproach, and a reminder that we have it in our charge, if it be not in our power, to diminish the number of the illiterate.

Not that the business is an easy one: from beginning to end writing is a pursuit demanding infinite pains. What a laborious business our own pot-hooks and hangers were! The mere training of hand and eye to work together in the formation of manuscript is complex enough, to say nothing of the expression of the thought. Hazlitt's juggler might well take a lower place than the writer of English—or any other written tongue. To watch a class of little ones learning to write is, for the sympathetic and intelligent observer, a demonstration in concentrated effort. So earnest is the endeavour that the breath comes short, the eyes shine with excitement, and, as like as not, the

tongue protrudes in a curious sort of sympathetic reflex action. Yet the art of writing must become so far automatic before it can begin to serve its actual purpose. If only some one would invent a portable and quite inexpensive typewriter which a child could carry to school, or an adult in his vest pocket! Literature might be the richer by the amount of time and effort saved. For it is only after the child is free from the difficulty of mere *writing* that he can attend to the further problem of writing *sense*. The time at which this becomes possible varies within very wide limits. Some children can write with comparative ease at the age of nine or ten; others cannot write when the day for leaving school arrives. And it does not always follow that because a child can read well he will be able to write. As a rule the intelligent and fluent reader learns quickly to write, but not always. Just as some highly intelligent children stutter in speech, so others stutter in writing, and write what they would not dream of saying, what, moreover, they will as a rule see to be wrong if their attention be drawn to it. Sometimes the cause is an obvious defect in nerve or in vision; again it may be an obscure irregularity that calls for special investigation. One encounters strange freaks in handwriting among

defective pupils. One boy of ten, endeavouring to write to dictation, always succeeded in writing a letter or two of each word correctly, but ended every single word with the letters ' a-r-y.' Another child—a left-handed boy—wrote in reverse fashion so that his writing had to be read by means of a mirror. It would be interesting to know whether the abnormality was the result of defective vision, and he wrote what he saw, or whether it was but a muscular aberration.

Writing is one of the most reliable indexes of nerve condition. Fatigue always shows in it. All who read examination papers are familiar with, and they usually allow for, the degeneration that is perceptible towards the close of an average paper. And it has not so far been possible to devise any system of ordinary handwriting that does not in the end take on individuality. Children may learn from the same models ; their teacher may, if he care, make a fetish of uniformity, but he will nevertheless be able to recognise at a glance the writing of any individual in a large class if he set an exercise that is not the mere copying of a head-line. Nature does like to have her own way.

Now and then a teacher discovers among his pupils one who promises to be a genius, or at

least a writer of unusual talent. He feels that with him rests a heavy responsibility; his teaching may, he believes, make or mar a Stevenson or a Pater. What is he to do? The less the better, in all probability. So long as he takes care that the budding stylist does not get into the way of thinking himself a stylist, but has wide opportunity of reading the writing of those who really are stylists, he may otherwise let well alone. For to writing there is no royal road; one man may make himself a writer by long playing the sedulous ape, another will simply become a great writer he knows not how. In writing, as in golf, all the champions have different styles and arrive at their results by different methods. Nor can any one of them, however he try, explain to the ordinary mortal exactly how the thing is done. We may, however, learn what we must *not* do, which is always something.

To many teachers the revision of written exercises done by the pupils is a sore trial. And not without reason; for it is in great measure both thankless and useless labour. The child does not often trouble himself much about the meticulously careful notes and corrections with which his exercise is adorned when it returns to him. Like Mr. Mantalini, he cares only about the 'demd

total' in the shape of a summary mark or a numerical value. Yet the correction of errors is a most important matter; it is, moreover, strictly *his* business and not the business of the teacher at all. Of course the average boy is quite willing that the teacher should correct his mistakes; he may even profess some interest in the matter, but it does him little real good. What *would* be of service to him would be the return of the exercise with some indication of the places in which revision and correction were required, but no indication of what the correction ought to be. He would then be forced to retrace his steps mentally and to reconstruct the work, keeping an eye open for error at certain definite points. The finished job would be less neat, perhaps, than if the teacher had performed the usual operations with red ink, but the proceeding would be infinitely more profitable. Every teacher knows how prone children are to repeat errors which have been several times corrected by the teacher; they will not be so apt to repeat those which they themselves have had the trouble of detecting. Such a method may be slow, but it is none the worse for that. There is no reason why a child should not revise the same exercise two or three times if need be. Some children must have more practice than

others in writing; there is absolutely no need for every child to do every exercise. Some of the best may often be far more profitably occupied in reading.

Not that the pupils are to be expected to do all the work of revision; where the pupil fails the teacher must step in. In addition, the teacher must at times revise personally exercises done by all the pupils, adding to each the few words of pointed comment that sometimes mean much to the pupil.

There is abundant room for experiment in the field of the teaching of the writing of English. The teacher will discover how best to establish a sort of *entente* between Reading and Writing, and he will be able to observe from time to time whether the reading done in class is having, on the writing done, the influence to be expected. For as one reads so he writes. Those who do not read will never really write, and those whose reading is confined to the ephemeral and the amorphous will never write anything that is worth serious perusal.

CHAPTER XIII

ARS LONGA

THE Artist is an older phenomenon in the world's history than the Writer. Man expressed his thoughts in cave pictures and symbolic sketches long before any one thought of such a thing as an alphabet. So our children speak to us through their drawings long before they can speak in the more complex language of writing. In time, the older medium gives place to the younger, and Drawing tends to become a subordinate and almost entirely recreative art, or a study which is highly specialised and scientific.

In the study of the early drawings of children one comes across curious and interesting problems, some of which have an interest even for the anthropologist. When little ones are given—or, better still, when they take—carte blanche as illustrators of a story, their efforts frequently puzzle the adult and require copious annotation and explanation. In the course of the annotation, it is usually made quite clear to the critic that he

is a very dull and stupid person, who fails to perceive the obvious. For we grown-ups are stupidly subservient to the laws of optics and to the claims of perspective, but children are hampered by no such limitations. If a child thinks the back of a house as interesting as the front, his drawing shows both together ; if the Wolf is ten or twenty times as tall as Red Riding Hood's grandmother, why not ? Imaginative Proportion is a finer thing than Perspective, and the child who can put down on paper what he believes to be ' just so ' is making his intellectual history. Those few artists who really understand children give them pictures and sketches which set at defiance all the canons of ordinary Art, and they are quite right. For a child is a law to himself in his art, and the drawings of children have a meaning that is often beyond the apprehension of the uninitiated. The visitor who examines the drawings of a group of little ones working without interference and on their own initiative cannot but be struck with the tremendous flexibility of the child-imagination. For the child does not see as we do ; he is the creator, and to him the creation is ' all very good.' From all times children have been artists when left alone. On every strand they make their designs in shells ; by every

brookside they build houses of their own contriving; in every city alley they make their sign-manual in chalk, or bricks, or pigment of some sort.

It has been left for our own times, however, to grant them in their schools and nurseries the material wherewithal to design and mould and fashion whatsoever pleases them. And the forms of material are endless. Chalk and crayon usually come first, but these crude media are supplemented by colours, and wool, and gay raffia. Nor is the artist compelled to work on a plane surface only; clay and plasticine afford opportunities for modelling in three dimensions. The less guidance and the fewer suggestions children receive in this sort of occupation the more valuable it tends to become. From the first one may note curious differences in children during the hours spent in constructive work; some children seem to have little or no desire to express themselves; they are the phlegmatic or merely imitative ones. Others at once set about making something; they do not seem even to think about what they wish to make; the desire springs to life with the opportunity. Such children will be rarely at a loose end in life. A good many do nothing till they see what their neighbours are about. Then

they set about either imitating or improving on the work of others. Character is writ large over the whole 'lesson.'

A worthy old Inspector of Schools was on a cycling tour, and while walking up a hill he had the company of a little girl of some twelve or thirteen years, who led by the hand a tiny boy of four or thereby. 'Well, my lassie,' said the kind old gentleman, 'I see you are taking good care of your little brother; is he not at school yet?' 'No yet, Sir,' was the reply. 'You see, Sir, (in a confidential tone), we never send the wee yins to school till they can tak' oot and pit in their ain buttons.' A simple yet very sufficient test of muscular control! In the various exercises devised to fulfil the plans for education on the Montessori system the proper adjustment of such things as buttons and clasps finds a place.

Now and then the modelling hour gives the teacher something to consider in the way of social conditions, for children are given to reproducing the things they have actually observed, and most of all, the things that have impressed them. One little child in a 'slum' school in a large city was told by the teacher 'Make the most interesting thing you have in the house just now.' For a long time she worked laboriously and in silence;

then she approached the teacher and displayed—a baby in a coffin.

It is a curious fact that many children become very fond of drawing and modelling although they do not succeed in becoming by any means proficient in either. It may be that in such work they are less ready to take the teacher's estimate as the last word in criticism than they are in matters where, as in arithmetic, there is a right and a wrong which all admit. Or it may be simply that the pleasure of the actual work is sufficient, apart from the result achieved. Many a man has a delightful day's fishing who cares little either for catching trout or for eating them.

During the whole period of Infant School life children spend a good deal of time on constructive work; as they grow older, Art takes a more specialised form. The pencil and the brush are almost the only instruments in use until, at the age of eleven or twelve, the boy commences to work in wood or in iron. But drawing is not now the narrow and stereotyped thing it was in the later years of last century, when it was confined almost entirely to the making of copies in pencil of certain conventional forms of ornament, based, let us charitably hope, on something in nature, but resembling in fact nothing in heaven

or earth. Children of to-day draw as a rule from the actual object, which may be almost anything, from the leaf of a flower to the elevation of a Cathedral. In the country Nature and Art may, and often do, go hand in hand. One ardent naturalist in a country school gave to each of the boys and girls in his highest class the task of observing, and drawing, once a week, a growing object. The drawings were most interesting, and must have been a source of deep pleasure to the children. One had drawn a daffodil developing, another a bird's nest in process of construction, a third a chicken at various stages, a fourth a twig of chestnut coming into leaf, and so on with some twenty objects. The drawings were in colour, and formed a most attractive volume when grouped. In the old days of ' Freehand ' drawing, any teacher was held to be good enough, and as a matter of fact was good enough to do all the teaching that was necessary ; to-day the subject is as a rule in the hands of teachers specially trained at Schools of Art, and the whole treatment of the subject is something like what it deserves to be. Between Art and Music there is, of course, a strong bond of kinship, and just as efforts are being made to raise the level of ordinary taste in the matter of Music, so something has been done to

spread among the 'masses' a higher conception of Beauty. Reference has been made elsewhere to the great improvement in the illustrations of the books from which children read in and out of school; it has been possible to do at least a little to introduce children to good pictures. Some teachers have periodical Exhibitions in their class-rooms. For the occasion they borrow from those who are willing to lend as many real pictures as they can procure. These they hang in the room for a week or more, meanwhile talking about them and trying to interest the children in the things which make them beautiful. In towns, visits are paid by children in manageable groups to Art Galleries, where they have the pictures that are most likely to appeal to them pointed out by a sympathetic guide. Many schools possess quite a number of good reproductions of famous pictures, which exercise their silent influence from halls and corridors. In the country less of this kind is possible, but Nature more than compensates for the absence of Art Galleries. Christmas and other festivals give opportunities for children to apply the principles they may have picked up during their career. In large schools each class decorates its own room, and keen is the rivalry to produce the most artistic result. The per-

formance of a school play is another opportunity that carries great value in the development of taste. The choice of suitable dresses gives chances to the interested teacher such as she seldom has. The mutual relations of colour and the combinations which blend or fail to blend are matters at such a moment of supreme practical importance. From the lessons received through such means a pupil may acquire a sense of artistic fitness that may have very deep issues in later life.

Most large schools are able to run a school magazine, and in it the pupils with artistic leanings find scope for the exercise of their powers. Economy usually limits the opportunities rather severely to line drawings, but even so much is something to be welcomed, as providing at least a certain amount of publicity to the aspirant. It would be an interesting experiment for a teacher to take to school one or two of the worst offenders among the cheap and bad illustrated papers which circulate among the children of the city, and discuss the pictures with the pupils, showing just where the worst faults are, and why certain faults are regarded as particularly heinous. Children may not have much time to read in certain walks of life, but they do look at pictures, and it will be a good day when we can stir up in them a very

profound dissatisfaction with such pictures as offend good taste. When we succeed, the ensuing generation will perhaps exercise a more stringent supervision over some of the eyesores that advertise our wares and offend our senses ; it may even go so far as to introduce a little of the beautiful into the architecture of our schools !

It is pleasant to find that children are very ready to apply in actual life the lessons in Art they may have received. Few parts of school work give more pleasure to young folks than what are called the ' Practical ' subjects, such as Woodwork and Horticulture. In these pursuits children find opportunities of making use of the ideas of beauty they have formed. A boy loves to make an object in accordance with a design of his very own ; to embellish it after his own fashion is a still greater joy. The laying out of, and management of a flower-garden afford wide scope for the expression of artistic tastes, and in the study of flowers children are brought close to beauty of the most appealing nature. The more drab and grimy the surroundings of the neighbourhood, the greater the need for any kind of influence that can bring a little of the beautiful into the daily lives of our children. Some would argue that the child feels the squalor of the street and the home the more

keenly from having, in school, the experience of being surrounded by things that are fair ; if that is so, it is perhaps well ; discontent with one's environment is often a strong incentive to the struggle for a higher and fairer life. Art is no respecter of persons ; the Artist may come from absolutely any class of humanity. And one of the virtues of modern civilisation is that the child of genius is practically certain to have some chance of making his way in life. For it is probably true that we are all on the look-out for genius, and when we think we have come across it, we try at least to see that it has a chance to develop. Modern commerce has many niches in which the artist may find congenial work, and the possession of the ' artistic temperament ' need not be, as in older days it often was, a hindrance on the way of life. The world has a wider and deeper sense of beauty than it had long ago, and even in the least promising places some effort is being made to create ' beauty spots ' for all to enjoy.

The teacher of to-day is very often an artist of an extremely useful sort. It is no rare thing to find the teacher able to illustrate his lessons by clever and appropriate blackboard sketches. Such a talent may mean a great deal to the pupils who have the good fortune to be in his class. At all

stages in school life the power of being able to make good use of the blackboard is a valuable one to the teacher. Infants love to behold the heroes and heroines of nursery tales growing out of nothing on the blackboard; when they are old enough to take an interest in the world they live in, they may learn much from well-drawn sketches of interesting things or people encountered in their History or Geography lessons.

Several attempts have been made to introduce the cinema into schools, and there is no doubt it might serve a most useful purpose, just as its precursor, the magic lantern, served in its day. Horace has two lines of sound educational psychology in his *Ars Poetica* :—

> 'Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem
> Quam quae sint oculis subiecta fidelibus et quae
> Ipse sibi tradit spectator.'

Without doubt our children learn much in the picture-house, but too little has yet been done to provide films specially for them. Sooner or later the matter will be taken up by some enterprising firm, and well done. Then people will wonder why it was not done far sooner. For in many ways the film could play a highly serviceable part in Education, and it might bring to the eyes of

our children many a thing of beauty they would certainly never have the chance of seeing in reality. Money spent on films and equipment might be saved on Geography and History books. We shall see.

Children must be taught to see, or they will miss a great part of the joy of life. For they do not naturally see things until they have been trained to look at them. The front door of a large school, through which every child had to pass daily, was adorned by a carving of a bee-hive, symbolic, doubtless, of the unremitting industry of the occupants of the institution. Yet out of a class of some fifty children of the age of twelve, only about half a dozen could tell a visitor of an inquiring turn of mind what the carving over the front door represented! They had probably all seen it hundreds of times, without looking at it. Probably to a child, as R. L. Stevenson has it—

'The world is so full of a number of things'

that only the one thing in the mind at the moment receives attention. Psychologists talk learnedly about what they call 'inhibition,' which is their name for minding one's own business to the complete exclusion of all else. Children are excellent 'inhibitionists.' What they feel no interest

in they cut off entirely from the field of consciousness ; this is very often a safeguard of high value, but it is at times a hindrance. We are often much delighted by the casual and the unexpected. If children do not acquire the habit of taking into the field of consciousness a little more than what is at the moment under the focus of attention they are certain to miss much of the joy and beauty of life. It is our business to put interesting and beautiful things in their way in order that they may as they grow up be able to see them for themselves.

CHAPTER XIV

VITA BREVIS

'One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.'
SCOTT.

REFLECTIONS on the brevity of the human span are not in keeping with the aim of a book that would proclaim the joy Youth brings in its train; yet it is inevitable that those who love to walk with Youth should regret the rapidity with which adolescence and manhood supervene. If human life be but a span, assuredly Youth is no more than a fingerbreadth; yet how much we would fain put into it!

Philosophers have given us many a definition of the end and purpose of Education; however these definitions vary in detail they agree in this, that the end of all Education is an ethical one. One of the best of educational thinkers used to say that the Education which produced 'an ethical habit of mind,' no matter what its precise form might be, was a successful one. And we are inclined to think he was right. For it is neither know-

ledge nor perhaps even wisdom or virtue that we seek, so much as an outlook on life that is sweet and sane.

If, then, we aim at such an end in our dealings with Youth, we must see to it that in our education there is as much of life as can well find a place there. In other words, the wider we can make our educational outlook, the more we may succeed in equipping Youth for Life. And yet we have at the most but a few short years into which to compress all we would wish Youth to feel and know and desire. Every teacher must at times have felt that the time of schooling was in truth too short for all one would like to do. Yet that way of looking at the matter was not perhaps the best one. Ben Jonson put the matter once for all when he wrote

> 'A lily of a day
> Is fairer far in May
> Although it fall and die that night—
> It was the plant and flower of Light.
> In small proportions we just beauties see;
> And in short measures life may perfect be.'

In other words, our concern is not so much with the actual content, so to speak, of the instruction which our children receive, as with the spirit in which it is given, and still more, with the spirit

it engenders in them. If we can so order things that our children may find joy and satisfaction in the things they do and learn in school, we are helping them to lay up for themselves a real treasure, which can never perish or fade away. No gift can surpass that of a contented mind, and such a mind comes only to those who are able to find joy in every form of activity, mental or physical.

Now it is manifestly out of the question for us to make things happy for others if we ourselves can find no happiness therein. For this reason it is an absolute necessity that those who are to train children must themselves be within the circle of Happiness. If a man or woman looks on the work of teaching as a mere method of winning bread, he or she is thereby professionally condemned for all time. True, it is a means of subsistence, but that fact simply must be forgotten if the work is to be done in the right spirit. For many a day—even yet, indeed—the good teacher has failed to receive remuneration worthy of the work. The fact is that the best teachers must, in the nature of things, always be underpaid ; no monetary reward is sufficient to represent the value of what they have done. For the things that really count are, as a rule, those that

are not explicitly in the bond. Moreover, they are not done as Work, but as Pleasure. There is a tale of a youth who went through the battle of Jutland, and described it later as having been 'better than any football match.' Now that is something of what the real teacher feels all the time. The external things, such as salary, conditions of work, and the like, may be far from what an ordinary mortal would call ideal, but so great is the actual joy in the work that the other factors count for very little in comparison. In the classroom all the commercial or purely business elements shrink to nothing before the surpassing interest of the work in hand. Only thus can our children come by their own. And they very often do.

From beginning to end, therefore, the brief period of school must be a happy one if it is to be effectual in its aims. No other single fact is so all-important. For only the happy worker does justice to his task and to himself. And, in a way, Happiness is a Habit. It can be cultivated, and it can thrive on very slender nourishment. At the same time, it has many enemies, some of them within the gates. These enemies must be fought, and in the struggle with them lies much of the joy that comes to the teacher.

With the enemies that have a physical and physiological sphere of operation the teacher has to deal only in part. He cannot feed the hungry—though he sometimes tries—nor can he give to weary nerves and muscles the rest they often need. Recent years have seen much done to secure that children in attendance at school should be physically fit to benefit by the instruction they receive, but there is still sad scope for the exercise of pity and charity in many a ' slum ' school. And the children do have the pity and the kindness that makes school a very haven of peace for some of them. ' Nursery ' schools are now a well-established feature of certain regions, and they shower happiness broadcast where it is otherwise sadly to seek. And nowhere so much as in the schools of the poorest quarters does a word or deed of kindness meet with a generous return. Time was when children had to be hounded into school sorely against the grain ; the trouble some parents have nowadays is to be able to keep them from school at such times as their health may require it. In fact, it is broadly true that when a child is absent from school without being ill, the absence is due to the wish of the parent and not that of the child. Those who know something of the homes from which some of our children

come do not wonder that they rejoice to escape from home for a great part of the day. For the average Infant school is a very happy place, and the excellent one a tiny heaven on earth. Nor have the children to thank the beneficence of School Authorities alone for their pleasant estate, but also the generosity of their teachers. Many an Infant Mistress spends a very large slice of her salary on her children, and says nothing about it; it is her hobby, and she would resent any mention of the fact in official records. What poor children require most is room to move about in, and a great part of their happiness in school is derived from the hours spent in a spacious hall, where they may play games and romp, and enjoy the charms of rhythmic and ordered movement.

With the advent of the 'School Doctor' has come a new age for the weakling. He has now a chance to grow up into a useful member of the community. If he be not strong enough to stand by himself in the ranks of ordinary children he passes into a special school, where he and his like receive the exceptional treatment their weakness requires. And a happy time they have. It is, to the visitor who is unacquainted with the nature of the cripple, a revelation to find how much fun he can get out of even his restricted

life. But he must be with those who understand him. The same is true of the blind; they can be riotously exuberant in their play, and it is possible for them to enjoy life with a surprising gusto. The more one sees of Youth, the more one learns to respect and admire its marvellous adaptability; some of the most lovely dispositions are found linked with the most distressing physical handicaps.

But the enemies of happiness are not all, or even mainly, external facts of a physical or physiological nature. Those with which the teacher has principally to deal are from within, and their subjugation involves on his part psychological study of the most interesting kind. The exhaustive discussion of all the array of foes seriatim would require a separate treatise, but it may be useful to mention just a few of the principal antagonists. The first is Fear. Happiness is incompatible with Fear, and the child who is in any degree under the sway of fear is thereby rendered incapable of having joy either in work or in play. In the bad old days, Fear lurked about the portals of School. It was no unusual thing for a new child to have to be brought to school by main force, making, to the last, a violent resistance. For in these days it was the evil practice of many parents to make

use of School as a bogey wherewith to quell the restlessness of children. It was the old story of the *semper ignotum pro magnifico*, or the *Quos ego*. As the average mother might put it, 'Wait till you go to school, my lad!' or, more concretely and more cruelly, 'Wait till the master gets you.' And it was cruelly unfair to child and school alike.

'Perfect Love casteth out Fear.' What higher praise could school or teacher earn than just this? And it is worthily earned as a rule. Of course, here and there may still be found one of the old and stern sort who holds by the other Biblical phrase about sparing the rod and spoiling the child. But for most in these days, the New Testament outweighs the Old. Love overcomes Fear. The wise teacher shuts her eyes to the signs of Fear, and in a wonderfully short time the Fear dies from lack of material to live on. For Happiness is just as infectious as Fear. And when a child sees his fellows happy he soon loses all fear and shares in the general joy.

Sometimes Fear does not vanish entirely, but gives place to its less compelling brother Diffidence, who is in truth a most troublesome foe to oust. In fact, at times Diffidence persists, in spite of all the efforts we make to dislodge him. For he relies on the aid of the abiding and subtle Sense of

Failure, that is apt to dog one's steps all through life. To try and to fail is bad enough, but to try hard and in the end be chidden for failure is a thousand times worse. Rebuke is the sworn ally of Diffidence. And yet Rebuke we must have; else were there no Law. And without Law is no Work and no abiding joy.

So in the use of Rebuke lies a danger to be avoided: perhaps Rebuke should be reserved for those cases in which a child has done something we do not wish him ever to try to do again. It may deter from the inception of evil, just as it certainly deters from the renewal of worthily-directed effort. The diffident child never feels the complete sense of security that Youth ought to enjoy. Risk is the very savour of many a sport, and Youth takes risks without troubling about their existence, unless Diffidence has been whispering in his ear.

Some children require little in the way of stimulus, others much. And the nature of the stimulus must of necessity vary with the nature of the child. If the wrong stimulus be applied, unhappiness and failure ensue. Encouragement, and even a little judicious flattery, can often dislodge Diffidence. So long as a boy is not quite sure of being able to do something, it is dangerous

to ask him to do a little more, but let him feel that he has really mastered one step, and he may with confidence be encouraged to attempt the next. With other children encouragement is quite unnecessary; they require rather to be restrained from excess of zeal, and from hasty action, if we would save them from the humiliating sense of failure that leads to Diffidence.

Another very common and persistent enemy of Happiness is found in Conceit. Some little children are really dreadful snobs. Of course they are not to blame, though as a rule their parents are. We all know the boy who simply must be first always, and who is apt to sulk if he is not: and we have all met the girl who, before she even enters her 'teens,' is a diminutive Lady Disdain. Sometimes we feel inclined to smack her—and indeed it might do her more good than harm. For Conceit, in most of its forms, is really contempt of Law. The masterful boy knows better than his masters; the disdainful chit is superior to all Regulations. Yet neither will taste real happiness until Obedience to Law has been learned.

The old dame who 'whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed' followed a good enough tradition, if with somewhat excessive thoroughness. For when all is said and done, Law must

have its penalties and they must be enforced. Well do children know how reluctant their elders are at times to enforce them. Who has not met the urchin who has a definite cycle of conduct? He grows naughtier and naughtier by easy and deliberate stages, till he passes a certain point, and Retribution, generally in the shape of a whipping, falls. Thereafter he begins a new cycle, and is a paragon of virtue for days, or even weeks. It is just the old story of Greek tragedy in miniature, first success, then overweening conceit, then Nemesis—with a moral writ large for the world to see.

Strange as it may seem, the ordinary boy does not object to a whipping—in the abstract. Nature has probably already made him familiar with pain as a penalty for disobedience and interference. So as a rule he bears no malice. A youngster who had deserved, and received, from his father a whipping, calmly discussed the incident with his mother a little later, when the domestic atmosphere was again normal:—'Of course, Mother,' was his comment, 'Daddy was quite right to whip me, but don't you think he did it just a little too hard?' A mere academic question of degree!

Without doubt there are times when the Devil—if it be not a legion of him—seems to enter into certain children, and take possession until he is

forcibly expelled. This usually occurs when a boy is about the age of, say, nine to twelve, or just when he himself is most prone to be thoughtlessly cruel. Of course there are thousands of children who never need a whipping, either in school or out of it. And there are hundreds of excellent teachers in whose administration of Law physical pain has no place. Pain may at times serve to exorcise the Devil, but it cannot, in any degree, assist intelligence or overcome stupidity or sloth. The same worthy Professor of Education from whose valedictory address a sentence was quoted in a previous chapter, used to say, discussing the question of corporal punishment :— 'There are two good rules for corporal punishment : Rule 1. Possess a good pair of "tawse." Rule 2. Never need to use it.'

One must agree very heartily with the dictum of our old friend in Marryat :—'Discipline must be maintained.' For without Obedience there can be no real Happiness. Cheerful obedience to recognised authority is the hall-mark of sound training in school and in Life. When the young teacher has secured from his pupils ready and willing obedience to fair and just law, he has laid the foundation, not only of his own future success, but of much of their future happiness.

CHAPTER XV

VISIONS AND DREAMS

THE day must arrive when Youth shall pass into Manhood or Womanhood, but first, if the auspices are fair, comes the age of vision and of dream. For it is truly a sorry business to set out in life with naught but coin or credit, skill or learning, to bestead us. And when Youth passes with no dreams, or but shattered ones, the outlook is sad indeed.

It may be a matter of speculation whence come the dreams of Youth ; it is no debatable question whether, when they do come, they have an influence on all the future. So much is at least beyond dispute. Between the dream realised and the dream unfulfilled there is, of course, a world of difference, but it is better by far to have dreamed in vain than never to have dreamed at all.

Some children are born dreamers ; from the first stirrings of consciousness they live in the future and are nourished on hope and expectation. Others dream but lightly, if at all ; for them the

present holds enough, and they enjoy it with a sublime lack of care for the morrow which is a lesson for many of their elders.

Yet we would not have all our young folk Bolingbrokes; some at least we would fain see with something of the vision and poetry of the second Richard, though we desire not for them his tragic fate. Without ideals and fancies, Life is a dull business. What can be done, then, to inspire in Youth that idealism which can make even of 'the common round, the daily task' something that transcends all triviality and meanness?

All through school life it is possible to train the emotions, and to help our children to be stirred to fine feelings at the right moments. But ere school life ends, something more is needed. Our children ought to see and reflect on at least a little of what is going on in the world they are soon to enter. They ought to follow—with guidance where it may be needed—the history of their own day: they should be made to feel that ere long they will be citizens of no mean city, of which they must strive to be worthy. For some children History is an inspiration and a delight; for others, a nightmare. All depends on how it happens to be treated. For those of older generations, it was

too often a matter of mere memory: it meant for us knowing the dates of all the British sovereigns, the terms of the great Acts of Parliament, the causes and results of wars and revolutions. Now most of these things are perhaps quite worth knowing, but there is little in them to set a lad a-dreaming. If his ideals are to be created and his imagination aroused, he must have people, not things, to think about. To a boy, Merlin is worth more than Magna Charta, and Drake than the Reformation. If we can make the great men of old live again for our children, we cannot fail to give them high ideals and put them in the way of noble dreams. Children are profound hero-worshippers; we must see that they worship at worthy shrines. Too often the heroes of History are like the curlews in *Locksley Hall*,

'Dreary gleams athwart the moorland.'

It is a matter of opinion whether the causal relations in History should be stressed with the young at all. Children have not lived long enough to develop a time-sense, and the elaborate Time Charts some books are good enough to provide for them are really so much lumber to most. There is no doubt whatever that children do have a feeling for adventure; they recognise and

appreciate bravery and enterprise ; they are interested in people.

In man there is not a little of the sheep ; ' Follow my Leader ' is a game in which he shines. For he learns it young and plays it all through life. If one inquire carefully into the choice of occupation a boy is making, one will find that in most cases he is simply following the example of a parent or a comrade. From of old certain occupations have tended to be hereditary, and the tendency persists. While often succession in occupation is almost involved in heirship, it is just as frequently the result of pure lack of vision. A boy happens to know a good deal about his father's work ; he has never been stirred either into originality or into ambition. So he follows meekly in his father's footsteps, and, being devoid of much in the way of idealism, probably makes quite a worthy man in a limited sphere. When the lad has ideas of his own, life is at times a much less placid affair. For parent and child do not always see eye to eye in such matters, and trouble ensues. The boy who has had dreams that embody themselves in definite and deliberate purpose, and is compelled by others to depart from his cherished ideals, is seldom a happy man. He may succeed ; in fact he very often does, being a lad of good

parts; but the dream haunts him all his days. Many a man is to-day at work in an office who would have been far happier, though possibly far poorer, if he had been a musician or an artist or a sailor. At times the boy follows the calling assigned to him with such success as to secure a competence, and then reverts to his original desire with almost boyish zest. Every teacher has heard of colleagues who, after a long and apparently successful career, went off to begin farming, which had been their lifelong secret interest.

Of course nearly all boys have certain passing ambitions, stirred by accidental meetings or by books read. Every boy, at some time in his life, has a desire to be an engine-driver, or a sailor, but as a rule it passes. When, however, a boy retains through the whole period of adolescence, a decided and deliberate desire to follow a certain line of life, his passion ought to be regarded as something much more than a whim that will pass. Obstacles may be both numerous and real, but if he is in dead earnest he will find a way of overcoming them.

It has been reserved for this age to try to do something to assist both children and parents in solving the permanent problem of occupation. Juvenile Employment is one of the questions no

longer left entirely to chance. Teachers are ready to note special talent; they have, or ought to have, opportunities to become aware of individual desires. Sometimes a child will consult a teacher on the question of his future before he ventures to broach the matter at home. Very often, and usually with happy results, teacher, parents, and child discuss the great question together. The better the school in which the child has spent the last few years of his boyhood, the more chance there will be of his having something to say for himself in the joint conference. For it is the duty, as it is the practice, of every good school to arouse in those who are completing their stay in it such an interest in life that the question of the part they shall play in it becomes a very real and grave one. Teachers sometimes set as an exercise in composition the theme, 'What I should like to be, and the reasons for my choice.' The answers are often most instructive, and not a little amusing. The general run of children select an occupation not because of its inherent interest, so much as for what it may bring, either in coin or in comfort. 'I want to be a clerk, for it is a clean job'; 'I should like to be a merchant, for merchants make a lot of money'; 'I shall be a message boy, for it is a nice easy job'; these are typical of

hundreds of the letters children write on the subject. But there are others; some there are who look not at the money side of the transaction but at the other side. Their letters run rather in this strain: 'I mean to be a nurse, for I am never so happy as when I am looking after little children,' or 'My ambition in life is to be an engineer, for if I worked hard I might be able to invent something that would be of the greatest use to men.'

It is easy to see from such letters as these who are the dreamers and visionaries, with an outlook on life that extends beyond personal aggrandisement and ease. And it is often possible to help a little towards the realisation of the dreams.

The last fifty years have seen school life made much less bookish and much more practical than it used to be; and this has added much to our opportunities of helping the dreams to come true. For some children are blessed with clever fingers, if they are not so fortunate in the matter of brains. The wide use now made of what is known as 'Practical' work, and the larger opportunities now available for the training of the hand, the eye, and the brain to work together, enable those who guide Youth to arrive at a much more complete knowledge of the powers and potentialities that lie in all children. In the old days the boy who

made little of his books was usually set down as a dunce, of whom little could ever be expected. In spite of the frequent proofs given that such a theory was quite wrong, the tradition persisted, and is only now breaking down before proof given in school. The introduction of Handwork into school was a cause of grave misunderstanding and not a little misapprehension in many places. The unthinking assumed that the end of all Woodwork was the production of joiners, and of all Gardening the raising of vegetables or fruit. Mothers maintained that their girls would learn at home all they would ever require of Domestic work. It required years of patient effort to spread abroad the truth that such occupation was by no means an end in itself, but rather an end leading to something far higher and more important than the mere manufacture of certain articles, or the mere acquiring by the pupils of deftness in certain directions. It is now generally recognised that in the workshop pupils are given an opportunity of discovering, and of displaying, the direction in which their bent lies. Deftness and neatness are purely secondary considerations; the main thing is that the child should develop an interest in what he is trying to do. The boy who designs and makes an engine, or a bookshelf or any other

piece of work, by his unaided effort, has a joy in the performance that is but slightly marred, if at all, by the accident that the engine does not work perfectly, or the shelf has a list to one side. The great thing is that an idea has been carried out in actual work. A teacher was one day doing a piece of work in a Science laboratory. Separated from him by a flimsy but obscure partition was a pair of boys, engaged on an experiment. They were discussing their task in an undertone, quite unaware of the presence of the teacher on the other side of the partition. Suddenly one of the boys, a rather raw youth who had given little promise of being a scientist, was heard by the master to slap his leg vigorously and exclaim, in a loud whisper, 'Hurrah! I see how the damned thing works now!' And he made a fine student of science, for he had found it interesting enough to puzzle over. And when a boy has reached the stage of being really interested in some pursuit, there is hope for him. For it is the interest we have in our work that carries us through.

One of the saddening things about modern life is the fact that so many of our young folk tend to become blasé long before there seems to be the least sort of excuse for it. The explanation may lie in the extent to which the young are at times

treated as if they were grown up. They learn to despise the very things in which lies their hope of ultimate salvation. We have all met the precocious child who was reading Shakespeare and Browning at nine—and fairy tales at fifteen! Nature will not be baulked of her own; if we make men and women of our children when they should be enjoying childhood, Nature takes her revenge by giving them childish tastes and proclivities when they ought to be doing something of value in the world. It is an old saying that you cannot put an old head on young shoulders, but there are those who would fain succeed in the attempt, and who initiate mere children into things that ought not to concern them for many a day. Youth ought not to be altogether too serious a time; the world may quite well 'be too much with us' even then, and if then, most probably for all time to come.

There *is* something in the old proverb after all. 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' is gradually forcing a reluctant recognition. Let the graduate—especially, perhaps, the Scottish graduate—of thirty years ago compare the university life of his day with that of the present, and he will be forced to admit that the old *régime* was both hard and narrow. For nine-tenths of the

men—there were no girl graduates before the nineties—the university course meant nothing but 'getting and spending'—getting information out of men and books, and spending it in the 'Examination Exchange' for the purchase of a degree. Of corporate life and combined activity there was little or none. With the establishment of Students' Representative Councils and Students' Unions things began to improve, and to-day in more than one city the undergraduates form a most useful branch of the community, and one both ready and able to carry out a public or charitable function with energy and success. In other words, Life is now no longer divorced from Education in our universities. It is possible for those still under tutelage to realise to some extent the joy of spending oneself in the public weal. The good work done in schools for War Charities ought not to be forgotten. Many a school regards as one of its most cherished possessions an acknowledgement from an Officer Commanding in the Navy or Army to the effect that during the War the men on service were made happier and more comfortable than they would otherwise have been through the agency of the pupils of the school.

To have tasted, before leaving school, the joy of dreams come true must inevitably be an in-

centive to further dreaming. And it is well that the school should foster desires for, and aspirations after, more than mere educational success. For too long, the sole incentive proposed in schools was found in a system of prize-giving, now falling somewhat into desuetude. For the prizes went to the clever boys and girls—who could not help being clever; or to the pupils who attended with perfect regularity—thanks to good health and careful parents; but seldom to the boys and girls who had really tried hardest or done most to deserve reward. Things have gradually changed; prizes are still given for brilliant scholarship, but also for such things as general helpfulness (awarded by vote of the class) or good influence in the school, or genuine effort, whether crowned by success or not.

Surely in these tendencies it is not hard to trace the evolution of Education into a real Prelude to Life. Youth is learning to work in the spirit of Kipling's Epilogue to *The Seven Seas* :—

> 'And only the Master shall praise us,
> And only the Master shall blame;
> And no one shall work for money,
> And no one shall work for fame,
> But each for the joy of the working.'

And there is no finer lesson.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DAY'S WAGES

'Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages;
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.'

Cymbeline.

THERE is no more wonderful thing in life than just growing old. To Youth, it seems inconceivable that a day shall come when the well-known joys shall lose their savour, and yet the world shall go on. But the days pass, and the years pass; passions wax and wane, powers and capacities develop and die; yet somehow the Cup of Life is still full to the brim, and with Joy. The athlete to whom the day when he shall no longer have his place at the wicket, but with the *emeriti* in the pavilion, seems a piece of sheer nonsense or else an inevitable and impending tragedy, finds, when the day has come, that he enjoys the match almost, if not quite, as much from the pavilion as he did from the pitch,

A highly gifted and enthusiastic teacher, who retired with extreme reluctance under the age-limit, confessed six months later that his sole regret was that he had held on so long, and assured his friends that he had never all his life been so happy and so fully occupied as now that he had nothing to do.

The secret of living lies in finding life interesting; and the secret of growing old in continuing to find life interesting. As the days go and the physical powers change, so the interests must in some measure alter. A man may play an excellent game of golf at sixty, and it may be quite as interesting as the game he played at thirty, though it is not, and cannot, in the nature of things, be the same game.

Certain interests, however, are lifelong, and among them the greatest and best is the love of children. It seems to grow stronger with the years; it grows also more tender, for we become wiser. Every one has seen how much less austere the average man is towards his grandchildren than he was towards his sons and daughters. Age has mellowed him, and at sixty he can come closer to six than he could have done at thirty. A veteran teacher, long noted for his rigid discipline and his austerity, returned, some years after his retire-

ment, to his old work, and took charge of a class of little ones. To the amazement of his old colleagues, his discipline was so easy and kindly as almost to be described as weak! The long-suppressed tenderness had at last found vent.

Rabbi Ben Ezra speaks wisely when he says,

> 'Grow old along with me;
> The best is yet to be.'

and those who are growing old in the service of Youth will do well to put their faith in the future. Life has been jocularly described as 'Just one damned thing after another,' but it is well to remember that even so the element of surprise may come in. We are never sure what the next thing may be.

The wages that shall come at the end of the long day will, without doubt, surprise and charm. For one never knows what they may be. It seems, perhaps, to verge on folly that a meditation on a theme so indeterminate should have been thus boldly entitled. Yet, though one cannot say with any approach to certainty what the wages will be in the case of a particular individual, it is still possible to reflect on what they have oftentimes been. Sometimes those very desiderata that

Macbeth so tragically enumerates as not having fallen to his lot :—

> 'I have lived long enough : my way of life
> Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
> And that which should accompany old age,
> As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
> I must not look to have.'

Few links form a more lasting friendship than those forged during school life. Some unite pupil to pupil ; others pupil to master. The former are the more in evidence, but the others are none the less durable for being the less apparent. Between pupil and teacher there must be, if the relation is what it ought to be, a certain shade of deference that tends to curb expression. Besides, it is only after a lad has had some experience of Life that he can realise how adequate has been his equipment, and how much he stands indebted to those who helped to forge his armour. Hence the teacher's true reward is rarely forthcoming until long after the toil that earned it has become a memory. For this reason, too, it has always the charm of the unexpected. Any morning may bring with it a recognition that shall warm his heart and give him further strength and inspiration. The success of 'Old Boys' in life is the best of rewards, even though it carry with it

no acknowledgement of the debt incurred in youth.

Apart entirely from public recognition stands the delightful accumulation of memories. Various poets of to-day have given expression to the wealth of memory that is treasured in the heart of the old dominie. Whether the theme be touched with a light hand, as in Hamish Hendry's *Auld Dominie*, or to more serious issues, as in Miss Symon's *The Glen's Muster Roll*, one cannot but be struck by the fact that when the day of toil closes the evening is ever full of fragrant memories.

Old Age has always its memories, doubtless, but not every old age has its memories so continuously permeated by the spirit of Youth. As to the mother her son never ceases to be 'the child she bare,' so to the veteran teacher his 'boys' never really grow up. They may be distinguished men of the day, but for him they are boys still, and when the wheel of life brings them once more to his side, the talk inevitably drifts to the great days of Youth.

In one of Mason's novels a character urges a would-be recluse to hesitate, lest he come to an old age in which he shall have no one with whom to exchange memories. No such fate need be

dreaded by any one who has in his day been in friendly and constant touch with Youth.

The study of child mind assuredly brings its reward. No man can spend a life in the solution of problems that are daily new and always absorbing without, consciously or unconsciously, acquiring a readiness of resource and a flexibility of mind that are of themselves of great value. It is sometimes said by way of reproach that few good teachers are good 'business men,' and the average cleric comes under the same criticism. Well, and if he is not, does he therefore stand condemned? Was Socrates a good 'business man'? Are aptitude for business and success in it essentials in the Christian Ethic? Man's business in life is to live as completely as possible, and the teacher who devotes himself to such study of man—in the making—as school provides, and thereby makes life an easier problem for others, cannot be said to have lived a life that is either incomplete or unserviceable. He may, indeed, so spend his own life that he is seemingly cut off from much that is popularly believed to be 'success'; money and fame may alike pass him by, but in truth he has his reward. If it were not so, why should men of the highest talent and the keenest intellect 'bury' themselves in remote country charges in

order to teach or preach ? There may be as much to do in a tiny rural parish as in a populous city, and in the end a man may serve the world better by ' burying ' himself than he would by playing a part on the world's thronged stage in the full glare of the footlights. He will also have a better chance to preserve a true perspective, and to look out on life with a tranquil heart and an unbiassed judgment.

A good deal, and much that is rather unpleasant to read, has been written of late years with regard to the lot of the rural teacher. For too long the doctrine was held that a rural teacher was one who was not considered good enough to secure a post in the city, or who was by reason of health—or rather the lack of it—prevented from serving in a larger sphere. True, there always have been, as there always will be, men to whom life in the haunts of the multitude is so unattractive that they prefer to sacrifice both money and prospects for the sake of living close to Nature. But these are the minority, and they have their reward in the life they lead. A question which is of importance, not only educationally, but more generally, is that of how to bring a reasonable proportion of the inhabitants of these islands ' back to the land.' One of the reasons why people flock to the cities

is that there only can they secure for their children the education they need. Without doubt there is more opportunity for advanced education in the cities than in the country, but recent years have seen great changes, and to-day there is scarcely a village so remote from civilisation that its children do not have the opportunity of securing a good secondary education without leaving home. Measures have been taken to attract good teachers to the country for at least some years; those to whom the life appeals remain, the others return to the cities after having spent some useful years in the country places. Until lately the remuneration given to rural teachers was often quite absurdly inadequate, but with the coming of wider areas, more equitable arrangements have come into force, and there is no longer any danger of a teacher fearing to undertake rural work lest he should thereby find himself 'shelved.' The study of country children—and, indeed, of country folks generally—is one that provides the thoughtful man with never-ending occupation and interest. In studying the manners, the speech, and the habit of mind of the inhabitants of remote regions, the man of culture and education reaps a rich reward for what some might regard as perpetual exile. The 'Tristia' of the rural teacher

has yet to be written. Let us hope it never will be.

The wages that fall due as the term of service ends are indeed manifold, and come from many sources. While the children are really the main contributors to the fund of happiness, no small share of the tribute comes from the colleagues with whom have been spent the varied years. In the life of a teacher, accident is bound to play a very notable part. The youth goes off to his first post entirely ignorant, as a rule, of who his colleagues are to be. Yet he will find that in the shaping of his destiny, they play no minor part. When he comes to the end of the long journey, he will find that no little share of the memories he treasures is filled by the colleagues, old and young, with whom Fate has sent him to work. It will be a strange thing if the memories are not curiously mingled, some recalling help given or received, others bringing back days of strife when things called for delicate tact and skilful management, others again calling up the joys of dreams realised in spite of adversity and opposition. But through all will run the joy of united effort, and the satisfaction of plans carried into effect.

To most teachers comes by the way a reward of quite another sort. Apart entirely from the

charm of association with Youth, and the enjoyment of the actual work of teaching, one must reckon as a very important gain the actual knowledge acquired in the course of a long career. For in order to teach well one must know thoroughly. Only from really exhaustive knowledge does first-rate teaching spring. The man who has spent years in what one might call 'General Practice' as a teacher must, during the time, have amassed no mean store of general knowledge. For the curriculum of the modern school is so wide that to do justice to his task a man must be a student all his days. And surely the opportunity of being a student is something to be very thankful for, and to appreciate as it deserves. In the course of his work every teacher makes the discovery that almost any subject can become one of engrossing interest. Many a man has been compelled by some temporary necessity to take over for a time some form of work which he did not regard as being at all in his sphere of activity, and discovered that a subject which he had been in the habit of regarding as 'dry' or 'dull' yielded, when one was forced to tackle it with a view to teaching it, surprising avenues of interest.

Fortunately, the life of the average teacher allows of a fair share of leisure. Summer vacations are

long enough to permit a little travel, and nothing does a teacher so much good as to see something of the world. As a result, it is common enough to meet with teachers who are something of specialists apart from their work. One man may be an expert Alpine climber, with the mountains at his finger tips, so to speak ; another may be a navigator of consummate skill ; a third may be a recognised authority on entomology or on ornithology, or a connoisseur of repute in Art. Stupid people sometimes grumble in an envious fashion about the long holidays teachers enjoy, but in reality the holiday is one of the main opportunities of continued study. And the children need the break in the routine quite as much as the teacher.

It is one of the great blessings of life spent in serving Youth that it need never really end, until Death writes ' Finis ' to the last chapter. A man may retire from official life, but that need not be the end of his association with Youth. Indeed it seldom proves to be. There are, thank Heaven, children enough in the world to give us all a chance. He is indeed to be pitied into whose life a child does not at some time and in some way enter, for it is certainly his own fault if the little ones make no appeal to him. For the woman in such sad plight our pity must be deep indeed.

Working days may be long past, but playing days—and children with whom to play—may be enjoyed to the very end by those, at least, who have learned to understand children.

Not every one does, even after years of association with and study of them. For it is no matter this of intellect or of zeal, but purely of heart and of soul. The Master who set a little child in the midst understood the lessons they alone can teach.

The supreme reward that comes to Age from a lifetime spent in the service of Youth is to be found in the possession, by Age, of the heart of a child, with a child's faith and humility, along with a child's lovely way of thinking no evil.

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